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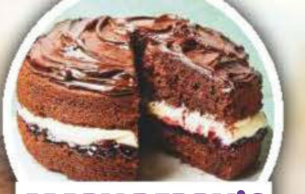

MARY BERRY'S
BEST EVER BAKES!

ALISON'S
skinny-jab
confession

COLEEN EXCLUSIVE:
'What's REALLY going on backstage at Loose Women'

MUM'S AGONY
'I survived the fire that killed my children'

ROYAL LATEST

FERGIE FIGHTS BACK!

As new scandals hit and Beatrice & Eugenie are 'dragged in deep'

'How I lost 4st in 4 months... on a low-cal diet'

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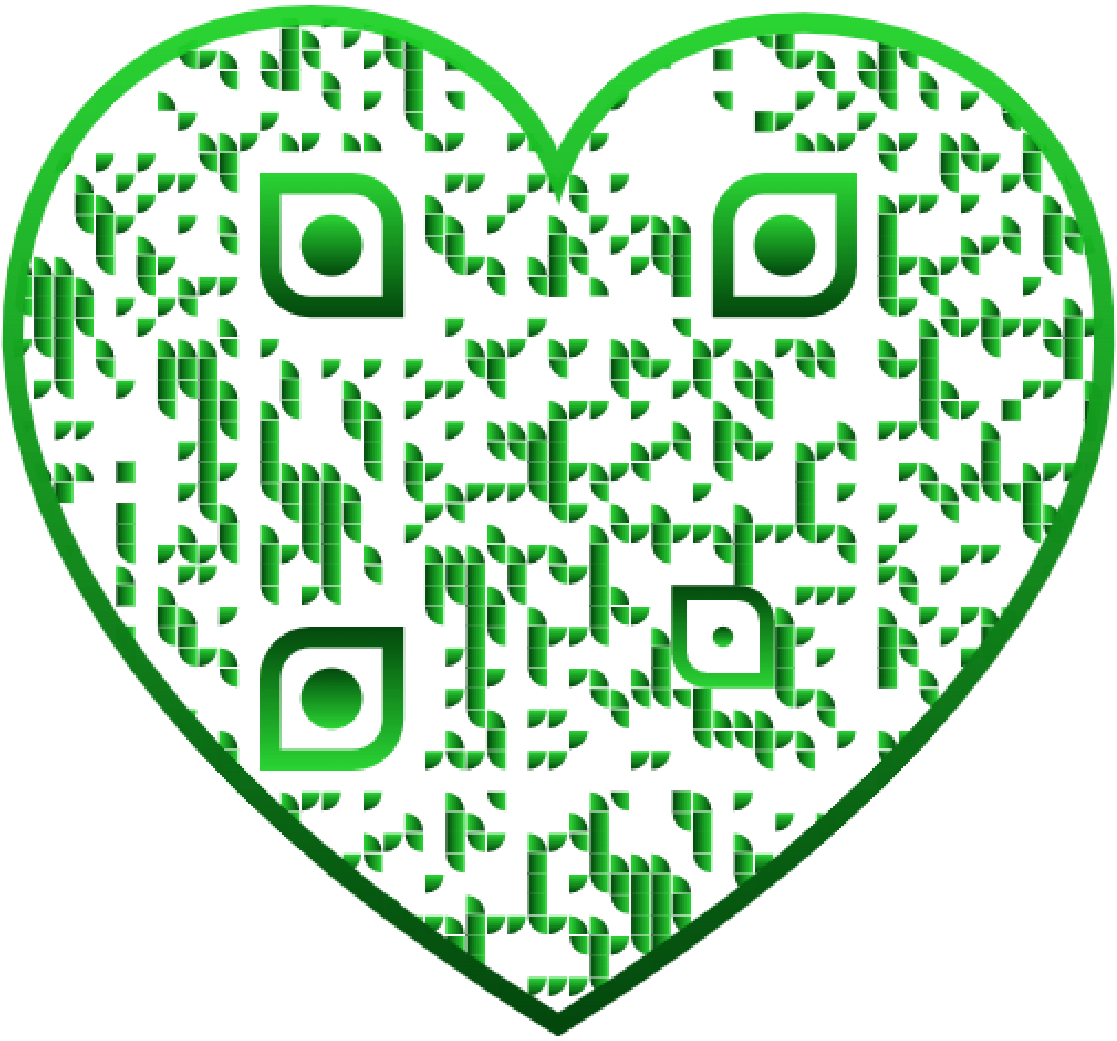

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this week in bella

GIRL POWER!

If you want to be hooked on a new nostalgic series, we know where it's at…

Here come the girls! After the success of Louis Theroux's *Boybands Forever*, it's now the ladies' turn. *Girlbands Forever* will dive into the UK's biggest girl groups over the past three decades. Expect honest accounts of the lived experiences from some of your favourite girlband stars, including Atomic Kitten's Natasha Hamilton, Kerry Katona, Sugababes' Heidi Range and Amelle Berrabah, Eternal's Kéllé Bryan and many more.

The series promises to serve up nostalgia by taking viewers on a trip down memory lane, while providing the true stories of the realities these women have faced being in the spotlight. Louis said of the series, airing on BBC next month, 'Going back and rediscovering all that music and those videos and the interviews they did has been an absolute pleasure. There was pain behind the music, too, and as is so often the case there was price to be paid for that level of young fame.

'But mainly we wanted this to be a celebration of a time of very special music and talent.'

P26
LIZ EARLE

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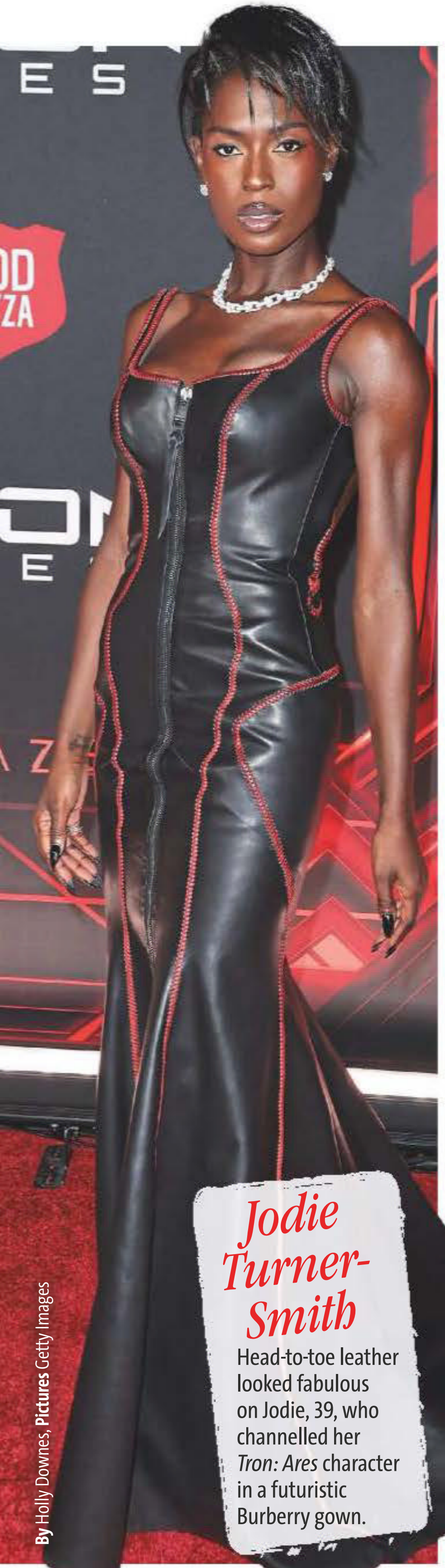
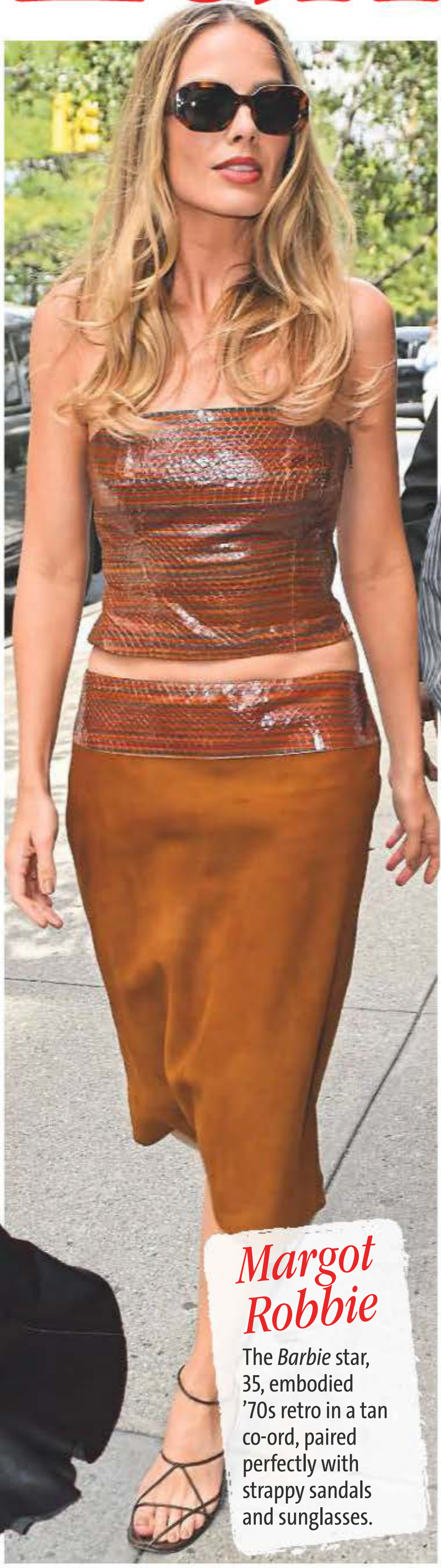
By Afia Kufuor, **Pictures** Getty **Cover pictures:** Instagram, Shutterstock, Getty

Luxe Leat



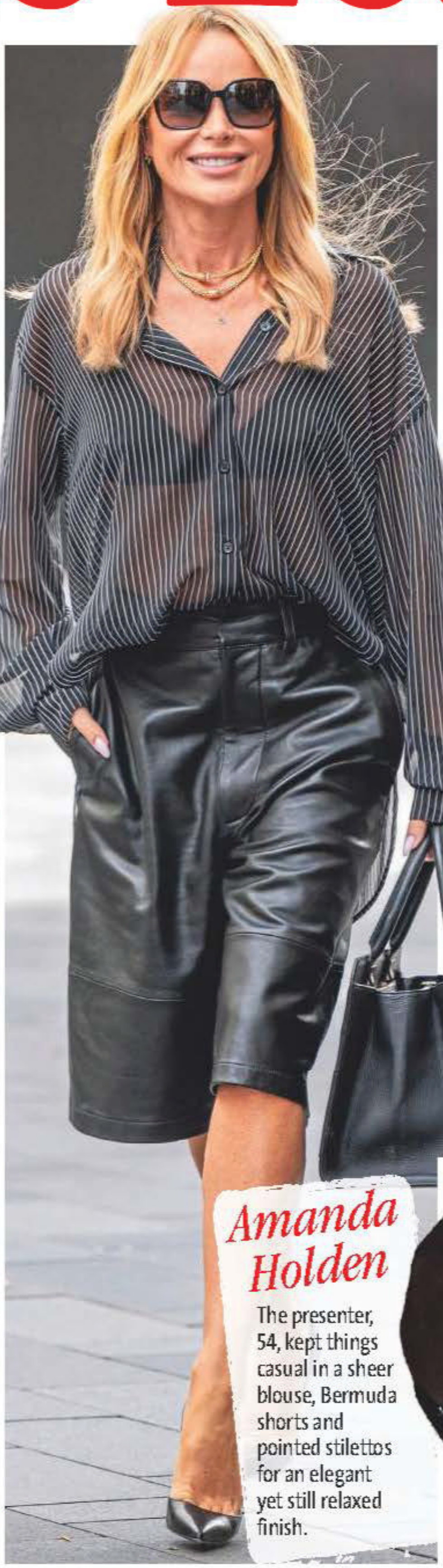
Jodie Turner-Smith

Head-to-toe leather looked fabulous on Jodie, 39, who channelled her *Tron: Ares* character in a futuristic Burberry gown.



Margot Robbie

The *Barbie* star, 35, embodied '70s retro in a tan co-ord, paired perfectly with strappy sandals and sunglasses.



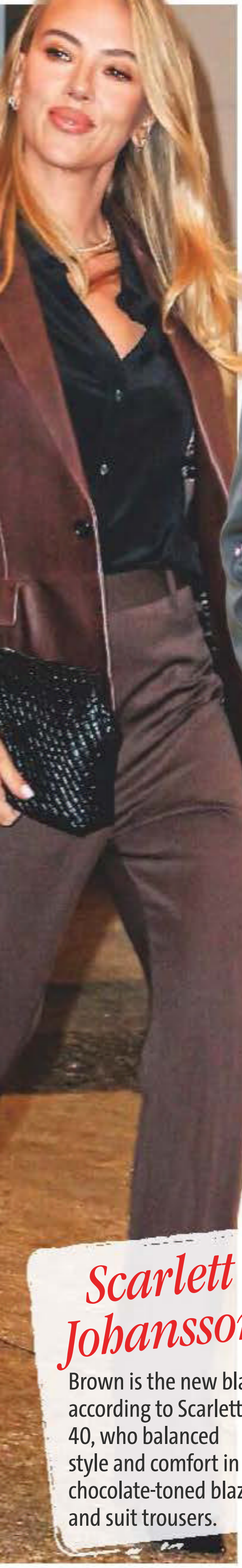
Amanda Holden

The presenter, 54, kept things casual in a sheer blouse, Bermuda shorts and pointed stilettos for an elegant yet still relaxed finish.

By Holly Downes, **Pictures** Getty Images

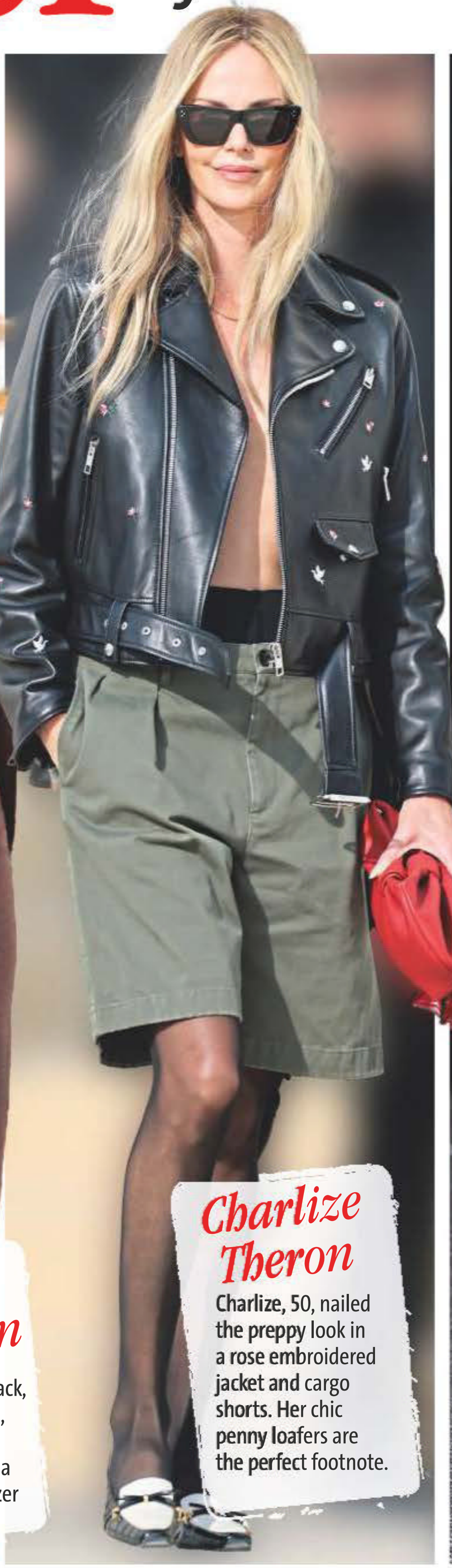
her

These celebs prove this classic fabric will always be stylish



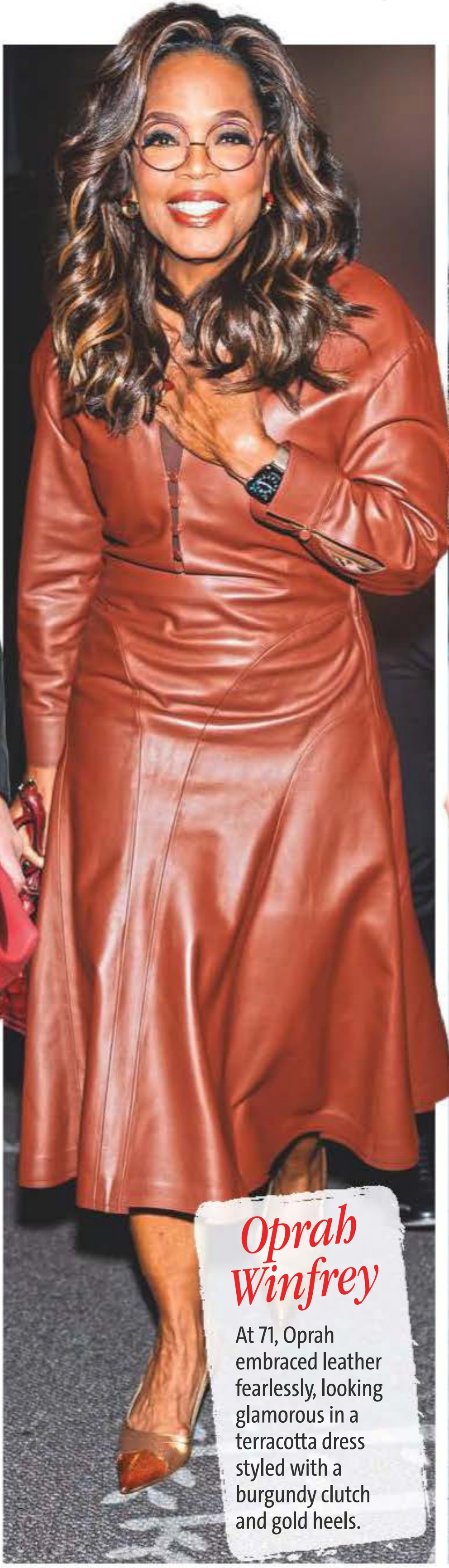
Scarlett Johansson

Brown is the new black, according to Scarlett, 40, who balanced style and comfort in a chocolate-toned blazer and suit trousers.



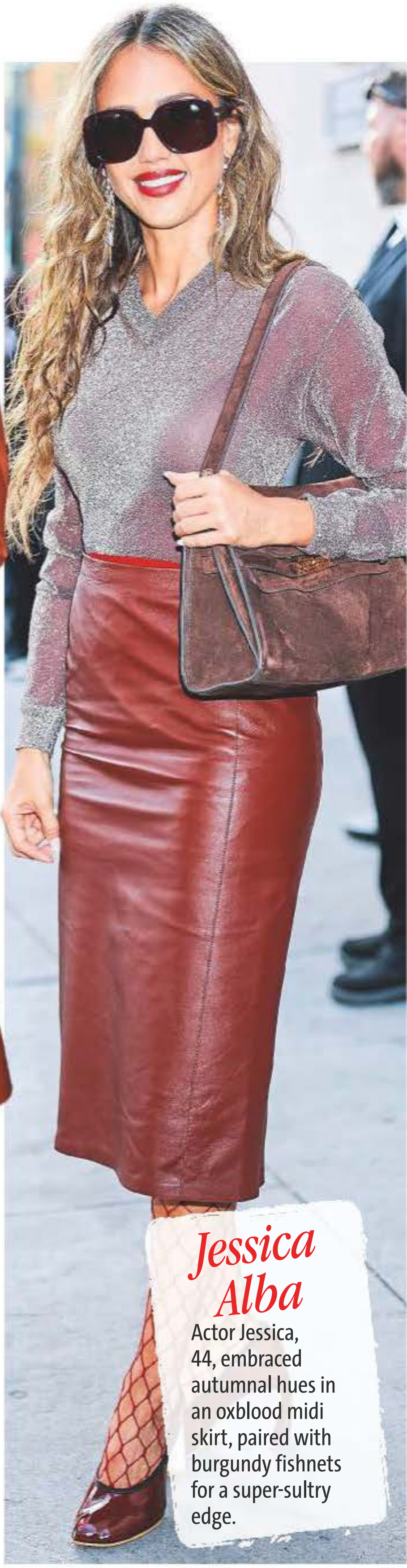
Charlize Theron

Charlize, 50, nailed the preppy look in a rose embroidered jacket and cargo shorts. Her chic penny loafers are the perfect footnote.



Oprah Winfrey

At 71, Oprah embraced leather fearlessly, looking glamorous in a terracotta dress styled with a burgundy clutch and gold heels.



Jessica Alba

Actor Jessica, 44, embraced autumnal hues in an oxblood midi skirt, paired with burgundy fishnets for a super-sultry edge.

Scarlett Moffatt tells *Bella* how she's preparing for her wedding day

Exclusive

With Scott and baby Jude

virgin
Jaguar
attitude
GREGGS

Scarlett: 'MY NEW LOOK IS DOWN TO HAPPINESS'

Scarlett Moffatt has been the recipient of welcome praise over her new look recently – but she tells *Bella* that nobody has been more surprised by the response to her transformation than herself. The 35-year-old has been flooded with online comments about her makeover, with one fan writing, 'Actually think you look the best ever!' and another saying, 'You look abso-bl**dy-lutely amazing'.

Speaking at the Attitude Awards 2025 earlier this month, Scarlett told us, 'Loads of people keep giving me compliments and I keep getting a big head, but I think it's just happiness.' Scarlett – who first found fame appearing on *Gogglebox* in 2014 – glistened in a figure-hugging gold dress on the red carpet, completing her look with a clutch bag designed to look like a Greggs pasty. She is reported to have recently dropped from a size 18 to 16, with fans first noticing Scarlett's glowing appearance when she was a guest on *Big Brother*'s spin-off show *Late & Live* last month.

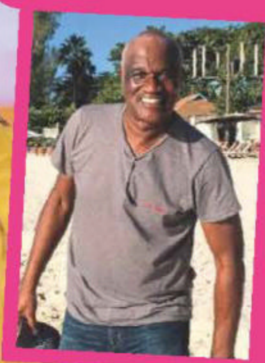
Scarlett – who won *I'm a Celebrity… Get Me Out of Here!* in 2016 – has previously been open about her weight-loss battles, but now says protecting her mental health has transformed how she looks. 'I started therapy at the beginning of the year and I honestly think if you look after the mind, everything else just falls into place', she tells us. 'I've just been going to therapy and doing things that I love. I'm making sure I'm spending as much time with my little boy as possible, because that's what brings me joy.'

The Geordie beauty faced backlash over her controversial weight-loss DVD almost 10 years ago. The DVD claimed to have helped Scarlett go from a size 18 to a size 8 – but it later came to light that Scarlett's shape-up was due to her following a restrictive diet of just 700 calories a day, attending a Swiss bootcamp and consuming diet pills. Scarlett has since admitted that the DVD was 'the worst thing I've ever done.'

The TV personality is happily engaged to police officer Scott Dobinson, with whom she shares two-year old son Jude. Opening up about motherhood, she says, 'All he does is talk. But the thing is, he's my child, isn't he? It would be more worrying if he wasn't a chatterbox.'

Scarlett and fiancé Scott, 36, have been together since 2018 and are currently planning their ultimate dream wedding after Scott popped the question in 2023. Spilling on their plans for the big day, Scarlett shares with us, 'We've got a venue, we've got a date, we've got some entertainment.'

She found fame on *Gogglebox*



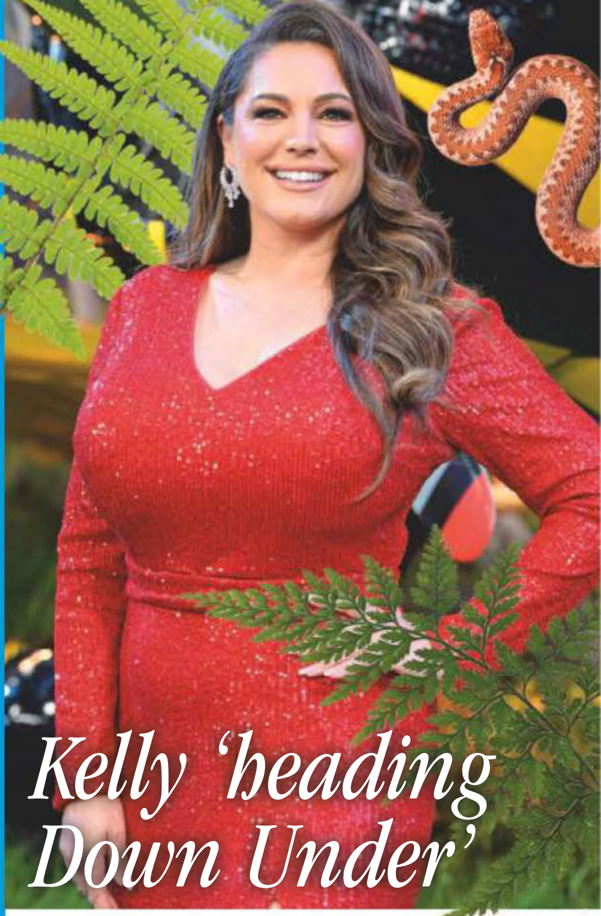
CHARLENE'S FAMILY TRAGEDY

Loose Women host Charlene White has shared the devastating news that her dad has taken his own life after going through a 'dark cloud he couldn't lift'. In a vulnerable social media post, the 45-year-old shared that she decided to be open about the recent loss as 'hiding emotions and the true depth of our feelings helps no one'. Charlene encouraged her followers to, 'hug your parents close, and always tell them that you love them. Because that's sort of our job as children, to love them, no matter where the road eventually takes them. Even if they end up taking the hardest, most unfathomable path.'

Brand Beckham expands

On her recent successful Netflix documentary, Victoria Beckham says her beauty business helped turn the fortune of her fashion empire around – and now it seems her daughter, Harper, is following in her footsteps. It has been reported that the business name HIKU BY Harper has been trademarked as a 'skincare and beauty brand', marking 14-year-old Harper's potential entry into entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, after the triumph of David and Victoria's individual Netflix documentaries, it is believed the streamer has asked the former Spice Girl to helm a series on the group's success.

By Afia Kufuor, **Pictures** WireImage, Instagram, Channel 4/Planet Photos



Kelly 'heading Down Under'

Model Kelly Brook is reportedly set to head to the *I'm a Celebrity*… jungle next month to take part in the show's 25th series, despite previously ruling it out. 'I don't want to eat eyeballs or sheep testicles', Kelly, 45, declared back in 2018. 'Even if I had a huge tax bill and I had to pay it really urgently, I still wouldn't do it,' she continued. Other rumoured cast members include former *EastEnders* star, Shona McGarty, 34, broadcaster Nick Ferrari, 66, and *Emmerdale*'s Lisa Riley, 49.

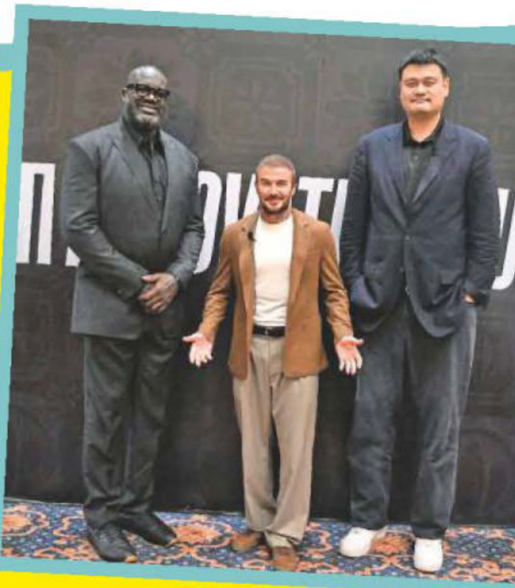
WEEK IN PICS

Hopelessly devoted

Following her trip to the *Celebrity Traitors* castle, Kate Garraway, 58, channelled her inner Sandy from Grease. The presenter completely embraced the '50s look, sporting Lycra leggings, a leather bike jacket and bright red heels.

Icon lost

Actress Goldie Hawn paid a touching tribute to the late Diane Keaton, who passed away aged 79. Reflecting on their 30-year long friendship Goldie wrote to her *First Wives Club* co-star, 'Shine your fairy dust up there, girlfriend.'



Sporting giants

After attending the 2025 NBA China Games, a photo of David Beckham, 50, standing alongside basketball legends, Shaquille O'Neal and Yao Ming has gone viral! A 5ft 11 Beckham looked comically small while sandwiched between the two 7ft-tall players.

Exclusive

Fergie 're fight for d amid fres

As Virginia Giuffre's memoir hits shelves, Sarah Ferguson is determined to protect Beatrice and Eugenie

Sarah wants to keep her daughters out of it

For Sarah, Duchess of York, the fight has become deeply personal. After months of renewed scrutiny over her past – and with yet another royal scandal looming – her focus has narrowed to one goal: shielding Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie from the storm she knows is coming.

And as the Palace now has to face the release of *Nobody's Girl*, the posthumous memoir by Virginia Giuffre – who alleged Andrew had sex with her when she was 17 years old, something he has always strongly denied – Sarah is steeling herself for a renewed wave of headlines and judgement. But now, with rumours the King has asked that she and Andrew be kept 'invisible' at royal gatherings, our source warns the duchess certainly won't lie down regarding Beatrice and Eugenie's rightful place in 'The Firm', no matter what scandals rock the Palace. 'Sarah's ready to fight back to stop her girls being the ones who suffer,' they tell us. Giuffre's memoir – published after she tragically took her own life in April aged 41 – promised 'intimate, disturbing and heartfelt detail' about her years within Jeffrey Epstein's circle and her legal battle with Prince Andrew, which ended in a 2022 settlement with no admission of liability.

> 'She's owned her mistakes'

Prince Andrew's friendship with Jeffrey Epstein has brought disgrace to the royals

For Fergie, 66, the fallout feels intensely personal. Earlier this year, she lost several long-standing charity patronages following renewed attention to her historic connection with Epstein. Friends say she was deeply saddened but determined to rebuild. Having endured decades of public storms – from her '90s tabloid scandals to financial

ady to aughters' h scandal

Sarah has a tight bond with her daughters

Eugenie has continued her public work

Beatrice and Eugenie are very close

setbacks – Sarah now feels this round strikes closer to home. The source continues, 'She's always owned her mistakes, but she won't let them define her daughters. She's carried the criticism so Beatrice and Eugenie don't have to.'

The duchess's two daughters have spent much of the past year working quietly on their own causes. Princess Beatrice, 37, recently stepped down from a trusteeship at the Outward Bound Trust, a move the charity described as routine but came just as headlines around the York family resurfaced. Princess Eugenie, meanwhile, has refused to retreat from public life, recently joining Princess Rajwa of Jordan on an official engagement in London, visiting Springfield University Hospital and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust. The pair met patients involved in the charity Hospital Rooms, which brings art into mental health wards. Eugenie later posted about the visit on social media, praising the artists and healthcare staff who create 'uplifting spaces' for recovery.

'Eugenie is more determined to protect her image than her sister,' says the source. 'Beatrice has had enough of it and wants to keep out of sight while it's all kicking off, but Eugenie is holding the torch for both of them by keeping a stiff upper lip. It's advice she's taken from her mother who had always done the same – don't show that it rattles you, carry on like nothing has happened. The show must go on!

'Eugenie is doing it for the four of them, really. Her name, thus far, is the only one that hasn't been tainted by this entire mess. Andrew and Sarah are deeply entrenched, Beatrice convinced her father to do the *Newsnight* interview, but Eugenie hasn't been affected so badly.'

As attention turns back to Andrew, however, even innocent connections can feel exposed. 'Every photograph is re-examined, every trip re-interpreted,' the source says. 'That's the reality of being a York, they inherit the spotlight whether they want it or not. It's devastating for the girls because they try to do the right thing. Their hearts are always in the right place.'

Those close to Fergie say she has reacted to the latest developments with renewed determination rather than despair. Having survived public ridicule more than once, she is said to be focusing her energy on ensuring her daughters stay unscathed. The insider continues, 'Sarah's instinct has always been maternal first. She knows she can't control the book or the coverage, but she can control how the girls cope. She's prepared to take the criticism herself if it shields them.'

Privately, friends say the duchess worries that the re-emergence of old allegations could undo years of quiet rehabilitation. Yet she remains convinced that transparency and hard work are the only answers.

In recent months she's continued promoting her novels, supporting cancer charities following her own recovery from treatment, and maintaining a steady public presence through social media and podcasts. The source adds, 'Sarah understands the public eye. She knows how quickly sympathy can vanish and how quickly it can return when people see effort and honesty.'

Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie have built lives that blend duty with independence. Careers, young families and causes far removed from scandal. Those who know them say they are leaning on each other more than ever. 'The sisters are united,' says a family friend. 'They've learned resilience from their mother and that's how they will survive.'

'The sisters are united'

As Giuffre's book hits the shelves, no one in the royal household doubts that the coming weeks will be difficult. Yet Sarah Ferguson, ever the fighter, appears ready to shoulder the glare once more. 'She's made peace with being the lightning rod,' the source concludes. 'If the world is going to talk, she'd rather it be about her than the girls.'

By Nathan Kay, **Pictures** Shutterstock, Alamy, Getty Images

Exclusive

MOTSI'S GLOW UP: 'I'm entering a new phase!'

Strictly star Motsi Mabuse tells *Bella* why she's getting ready for her life to change…

Dazzling on the *Strictly* panel

At the Elizabeta Zefi launch

We're used to seeing Motsi Mabuse sparkling from behind the judges' desk on *Strictly Come Dancing*. And the 44-year-old is planning on applying her usual feistiness to her next challenge – the menopause.

Speaking to *Bella* at the UK launch of Elizabeta Zefi haircare at London's John Bell & Croyden, Motsi opened up about going through perimenopause and what she's doing to prepare her body for the change.

'When I switch on social media, everybody is talking about menopause and perimenopause. I am going into that, and it seems like I'm facing hell. I'm going directly into it now and I thought, "Before I arrive, let me arrive in my best form",' she says.

> 'It seems like I'm facing hell'

'I only hear fear, I don't hear anything else. I guess there's an awareness [that] our algorithm will show us the bad stuff,' she tells us. 'I had to change things and dress differently because menopause is calling my name! I'm 44. I feel like something's happening.

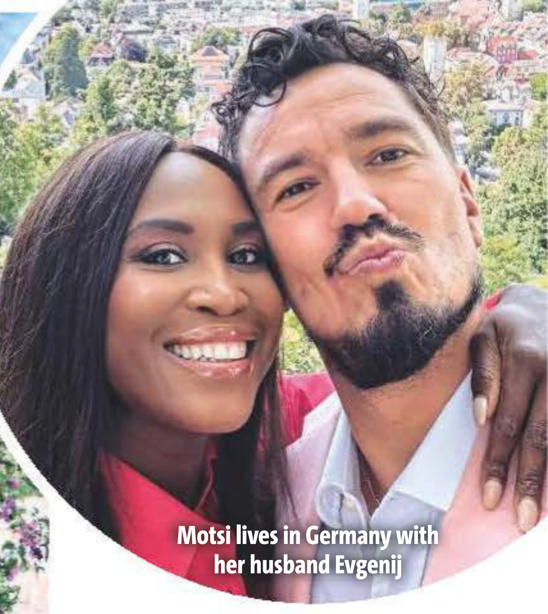
'I'm not having mood swings, I'm feeling a vibe that wasn't there before. It's letting me know something is happening. I'm entering a new phase. The good thing about it is just that I'm walking into a space where I feel like I have nothing to prove anymore. Slowly, I'm able to say no to certain things and I guess that's growth.'

Since the new series of *Strictly* started last month, viewers have taken to social media to comment on Motsi's recent glow up, with one fan writing online, 'Motsi looks incredible'. But Motsi tells us the change has come naturally.

'I'm not strict on my diet but I'm aware,' she explains. 'I built a gym in my house, I spend my time in the gym all alone. I work out for an hour and a half a day. People tell me I've lost weight, but I don't see that – I don't weigh myself, I don't talk about it, I'm just glad I've found a way to function.

'Going into the sauna is a must, too. It's a good exercise for your heart, all the toxins sweat out of your body, and you can relax. Before the show last week, I went into the sauna three times! It deals with all your water

With her seven-year-old daughter



Motsi lives in Germany with her husband Evgenij

retention. I drink lots of water too. The weather is changing now so it's great for your immune system.

'I've also got an ice bath. I bought a cheap one, just to test it out, but I'm using it. Now I'll start saving for the expensive one, because at first, I said, "Let me buy a cheap one for a couple hundred euros, just to see if I really use it." And then I fell in love. So now I'm saving up for the real deal!'

Motsi – who joined *Strictly* seven years ago and has judged the German version, *Let's Dance*, for 14 years – says she is enjoying sitting alongside her fellow judges Craig Revel Horwood, Shirley Ballas and Anton Du Beke more than ever.

'*Strictly* feels like one big family and we spend hours and hours laughing together on the judging panel. When people say to me, "What's next?" I always think, "Well what on earth would be next?" because it's the best job in the world!'

'I love doing *Strictly* because it's just so different from my daily life!' giggles Motsi. 'I get one day in the week where I get glammed up, where I'm being listened to and heard, when I get to choose beautiful outfits! It's a bit like a short holiday.

'And then I go with my life where I'm just the mum that runs errands, I wear tracksuit bottoms, I don't dress up! I'm doing school drops, dance school, bringing my daughter to her tennis or swimming. It's an ordinary life and I'm lucky with that.'

Motsi – whose sister Oti has returned to the show as a choreographer this series – usually resides in Germany with her husband Evgenij Voznyuk and their seven-year-old daughter.

'Living in Germany, I can live a relatively normal life. I do the show and then I disappear! Obviously, I present the same show in Germany and it's also been going 20 years and is huge. But the Germans are quite conservative, so they just leave us alone. It's not the same, nobody cares! We live in the forest with animals. And luckily my husband is good for my mental health. We get on so well.'

'I've found a way to function'

The dancer – who often experiments with wigs while filming, says, That's why I love the Elizabeta Zefi range so much because it's silicone-free and hormone-free with natural ingredients. I'm addicted to the hair mask – it restores and protects my hair, especially after it's stressed.'

'In my spare time, I love to keep my hair open because I love my daughter to see me with my natural hair the most. Every time I put on a wig she says, "You're going to work!"'

● *For more information, visit elizabetazefi.com*

By Katie Banks, **Pictures** Alamy, BBC, Instagram/Motsi Mabuse, Planet Photos

Exclusive

'I'm in therapy – it's the best thing I've ever done'

As *Loose Women* faces a huge shake-up, Coleen Nolan talks grief, new grandchildren… and what's really going on backstage

Coleen lost sister Linda in January

She's best known as the straight-talking *Loose Women* panellist who has been on our screens making us laugh for 25 years, but Coleen Nolan isn't afraid to show her more vulnerable side.

As she prepares to share all on stage during her *This Is Me* tour, the 60-year-old opens up in an exclusive chat with *Bella* about the looming changes on the ITV daytime show and how she's been coping with so much going on in her family and professional life...

Loose Women has hit the headlines recently amid ITV's cuts. How's morale backstage?

When it was first announced, morale was low, purely because of all the amazing people behind the scenes losing jobs. It was really sad, but now we all know what's going on, the morale is amazing again. It's going to be a massive loss not being able to have a [studio] audience, but the stories of backstage bickering are so fake. They're like my second family, it's like having extra sisters. Back in the day, there were times when it was a bit weird. But it's just fabulous now, I love it.

> 'It's just fabulous now'

Are any of the panellists losing their jobs?

No, [the producers] have just got to work it out because we'll only be on air for 30 weeks. But there's no mention of anyone going. We have to have a big pool of women because a lot of us are mothers or grandmothers and have other jobs outside of it. That's why it's great – then they've always got cover.

You recently posted a message about grief on social media. How are you feeling now?

I'm really good. I started therapy after my sister Linda passed away; I was really in a bad place. I just lost my mojo, I didn't want to do anything. I didn't want to go back to work and put a face on and smile and be funny. I was doing everything on autopilot. My management were telling me all these amazing things I was being offered and I just thought, 'I don't care.' I was so overwhelmed and just needed help. Therapy is absolutely the best thing I've ever done, I still go now. I've got a beautiful family, my sisters and brothers, nieces and nephews, my own kids, but they were all grieving as well. I just needed somebody that I didn't have to be strong in front of. Obviously I still miss Linda, but I'm in a really good place.

Making the panel laugh on *Loose Women*

How do you allow yourself to heal?

I think that's the word – allowing

Coleen has opened up on the ITV cuts

yourself. You have to acknowledge it, have your moments of screaming and crying, and then you have to get up because life goes on. Linda and Bernie would be saying to carry on because life's too short. If anything, it's made me realise you really have to embrace life.

You're about to welcome two new grandchildren...

I'm so excited! My daughter's due very soon, my eldest boy Shane's baby is due about three or four weeks later. And then Jake's son is one in November. I've got them all for Christmas, I can't wait.

Are you excited to be heading back on tour next year?

I am, but I'm quite nervous because it's still all in the planning process. I really want it to be good. It's not like my last tour where it was all singing and dancing. It's more of 'An Audience With'. I'll talk through my life and show some clips, but I do want some songs in there. By the end I want everyone on their feet dancing.

She'll be back on stage next year

● *Tickets for Coleen Nolan's This Is Me tour are on sale now from glasswerk.co.uk/coleen-nolan*

Exclusive

Alison: 'Obsession with my weight is TROUBLING'

She's had enough of focus on her 13st weight loss

After achieving her goal of slimming down and feeling healthier, Alison Hammond would rather that less attention is paid to her weight loss. The *This Morning* presenter, 50, has lost an incredible 13.5st over the past five years, after being diagnosed as pre-diabetic in 2020.

'Weight is on everybody's mind, everyone's obsessed by it,' she tells *Bella*. 'It's quite interesting how me doing normal things like walking down the street or getting my photo taken on a red carpet is now highlighted as me "showing off my figure". I do feel it is troubling because I'm exactly the same person – bigger or smaller. There's no difference to Alison at any size. Obviously, it's healthier to be smaller.'

Alison's weight-loss comes after she lost her mum Maria, who had Type 2 diabetes, in January 2020 from lung and liver cancer. 'The reason why I lost weight is because of diabetes,' she says.

The mum of one – who now weighs around 16.5st after being 30st at her heaviest – achieved her amazing slimdown through hard work and overhauling her lifestyle, with regular workouts and a clampdown on sweets and fatty foods. However, she says she would consider weight-loss injections in the future.

Speaking at the Women Of The Year Awards, she said, 'I'm not saying that I won't have the jab later on in my life. Maybe next year, I might change my mind and I might start jabbing up. They help a lot of people. What does it matter how someone loses their weight? Would you rather me die from being obese?'

By Samuel McManus and Shereen Low, **Pictures** Shutterstock, Getty Images, Instagram

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EXCLUSIVE 'THE KING'S ANGRY, UPSET & DEVASTATED'
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A mum went viral after admitting that she takes her children out of school every year for their special day. But some parents argued there is no need, and they can celebrate once it's home time.

So we ask…

Is it OK to keep kids off school on their birthday?

No

'It's so much more fun for them'

Emily Goyal, 41, counsellor

My son Zevi is a January baby and his birthdays, once he started school, fell on weekends or during lockdown, so I was used to being with him on his special day.

But when he turned seven, it landed on a school day. I was dreading being away from him but never once did I consider keeping him off. What message would that send? It's not acceptable to not turn up for work on your birthday, so why would it be acceptable not to send them to school?

Plus, it teaches resilience. Life is full of days when we have to show up even if we'd rather be doing something else. Learning to celebrate around responsibilities is an important life skill.

Besides, he had the best day! He came home so excited telling me how special he felt with his classmates singing to him. He took in sweets to share and loved spending the day with all his friends. We spent the evening as a family celebrating with pizza and presents and he had a party at the weekend with all his pals. The celebrations were dragged out, which he wasn't complaining about!

Since my youngest Edie, a May-born child, started school she's always had her birthday on a weekday and, just like her brother, has loved it. In fact, I recently asked them when they'd rather have their birthday and they both said school day! It's so much more fun for them both and I can't imagine taking that away from them.

Yes

'One day off isn't the end of the world'

Catherine Lofthouse, 44, journalist

None of my three boys, aged 12, 11 and six, have ever been at school on their birthday. We usually head to Alton Towers or some other big visitor attraction so they can enjoy a day out without the crowds.

One son is an August baby, so he's lucky in that respect. But the other two have June and September birthdays, so we just tell the school they won't be there if their big day isn't on a weekend.

Some of their teachers have been really supportive of our decision and we've never really had any issues from the school attendance team either.

One day off isn't the end of the world – making memories as a family is a better way to spend your birthday than sitting in a classroom.

Once you're an adult, you can always take annual holiday leave on your birthday for the vast majority of jobs, and I think children should also get the same say.

They may choose to go to school if they want to be with their friends or if there's a trip that day. But for lots of children, school isn't a happy place and, even if they put up with it for the rest of the year, it's okay for them to give it a miss on their birthday.

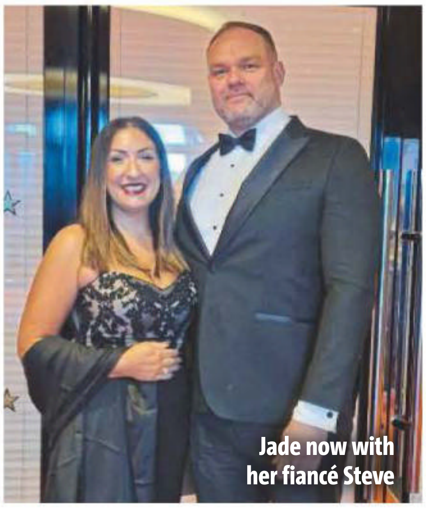
SHARE YOUR VIEW ...with Bella online at bellamagazine.co.uk or on facebook.com/bellamagazineUK

By Paula Costas, **Pictures** Shutterstock

'I survived a house fire that KILLED MY CHILDREN'

Jade Horton, 40, hit rock bottom after her kids were cruelly taken. But despite the darkness, she found the strength to keep going

Peeking round the door of my little boy's room, I called, 'Time for bed, you two!' As usual, Isaac, three, and his sister, Sienna, seven, were snuggled up together watching a movie, which melted my heart. Isaac was desperate to be just like his big sister, while I called Sienna 'mother hen', because she always looked out for him. They were thick as thieves. It was December 2020, and we'd had a rough few years, but finally life was back on track. Their dad and I had split after Isaac was born, and recently, we'd moved in with my new partner, Dan. We lived in a lovely modern three-storey townhouse in St Neots, Cambridgeshire. Sienna's room was at the top of the house, opposite Dan and me, while Isaac was on the first floor.

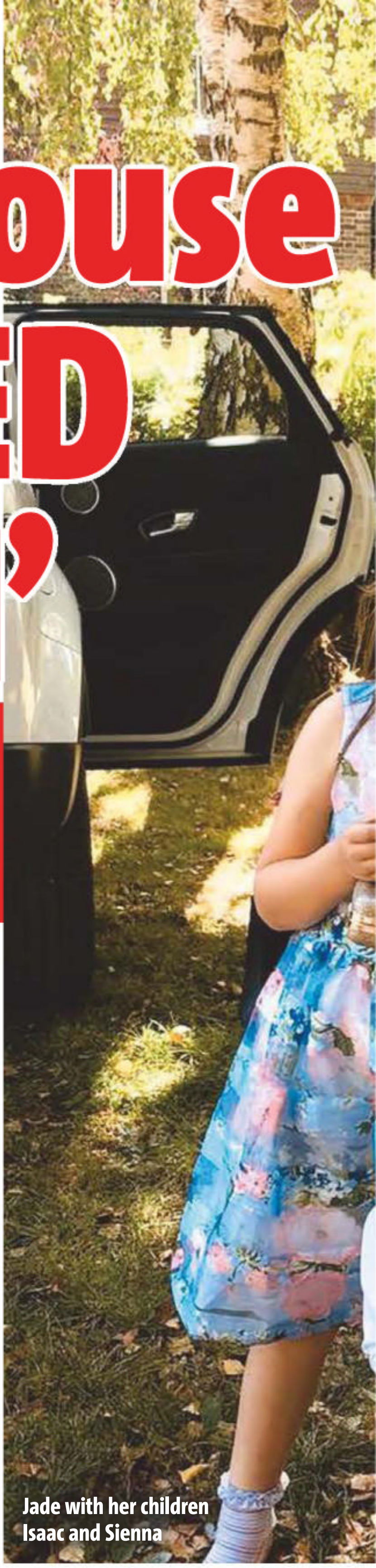

Jade now with her fiancé Steve

The siblings were thick as thieves

'I was jolted awake'

I went to bed a few hours later but suddenly I was jolted awake by Sienna screaming. Dan had already left for work, and the house was dark. Half asleep, I leapt out of bed. and opened the bedroom door. Suddenly, immense heat hit me, smoke filled the room and flames licked up the staircase near Isaac's room. I knew I had to get to my babies, but I couldn't see or breathe… I felt my way to the window, and as I threw it open, I saw our neighbours in the garden.

I hoped they'd called 999 and I went back to find my phone and called Dan. Losing consciousness, I was unsure how long had passed when I heard voices, including Dan's, in the house. I couldn't hear Sienna or Isaac, so I assumed they'd got out safe and relief flooded my body. I felt my way back to the window, where everyone yelled at me to jump. Looking down, I took a deep breath then pushed myself out. There was a crunching sound as I hit the ground and pain seared through me. My eyes scanned frantically for Isaac and Sienna as Dan ran over. 'Where are my babies?' I asked. He then told me the most unimaginable news – my children had died. I screamed a piercing roar of pain.


Jade with her children Isaac and Sienna

Blue-lighted to hospital, I was in and out of consciousness, then woke to my family around me. I thought I was going to die, and in a way, I was relieved I'd be with my children again. A doctor explained I'd shattered bones in my spine, pelvis, heels, ankles, wrist and hip socket among others. I'd been in surgery for 18 hours and undergone two blood transfusions. After seeing five different consultants, I was told I'd never walk again. I felt like I was trapped in a nightmare as I learnt

The fire damage

the fire had broken out after Dan had left for work, and he'd raced home after I called him. Our neighbours had phoned 999 and about 40 firefighters were sent to tackle the blaze and desperately tried to get my children out. Dan tried to burst through the front door three times, but was beaten back by flames and burnt on his arm. The firefighters deemed it too dangerous to go inside. Our story was all over the news, and the cruel comments people wrote made me sick. 'How could she save herself and leave her children to burn to death?' one said. But if I'd known they were still inside the house, I'd have died in there with them.

I focused on recovery and organising the funeral. As the weeks went by, I started to feel the presence of Isaac and Sienna around me. I'd always been a spiritual person, and it really felt like they were telling me to keep living. Twelve weeks after the fire, I managed to stand with the help of a frame and shuffled down the corridor. Doctors and nurses looked on, amazed, but all I could hear were my babies, shouting, 'Go on, Mummy!' Soon after, we held their funeral at Peterborough crematorium. One little pink coffin for Sienna and a tiny blue one for Isaac, both covered in flowers.

'I'd hear them talk'

In 2022, an inquest heard that, on the balance of probabilities, the fire started in a first-floor bedroom likely from a TV at the foot of Isaac's bed. The coroner heard how a 'perfect storm of bad luck' allowed the fire to spread rapidly up the staircase and into Sienna's bedroom. They were both likely overcome with smoke and fell asleep before the flames reached them, which gave me some comfort. I prayed Isaac hadn't even woken up.

I was discharged from hospital and moved to temporary housing. But mentally, I struggled. If a fire alarm went off, I was transported back to that morning. When I opened a door, I'd imagine it was bedroom door in those early hours again. It became unbearable. All I wanted was to be with the children and my thoughts turned suicidal. Dan helped me as much as he could, but he had his own struggles, and we ended up separating. I was at rock bottom.

While at my lowest, I'd find coins on the ground minted to the year one of my babies was born and two robins – Isaac's favourite bird – would appear in my garden. It gave me hope, so I looked into the power of reiki and spiritual healing. After a few sessions, I felt more able to cope. I still sensed my children around me and sometimes I'd hear them talk to me or see them at the end of my bed. Although the pain of losing them was always there, it gave me the strength to keep going.

Soon, I managed to walk unaided and retrained as a spiritual healer. We set up a memorial garden for Sienna and Isaac at the old house, and in 2024, I was paid a large sum settlement from the TV manufacturer. It wasn't enough for what I'd been through, but it will help with my health issues as I get older. I have daily chronic pain, permanent nerve damage, and a rare spinal condition called arachnoiditis, which could cause paralysis at any point in my life. Recently, I won a national Woman of Courage Award for my reiki work. When I walked up on stage, I could hear Sienna and Isaac cheering for me. Now I'm engaged to a new man, Steve, and am in a better place. My heart will never feel whole again, but my children will always be by my side.

By Heather Main, **Pictures** Alamy Stock Photo. Dan's name has been changed

'My plane shame made me lose 4st – look at me now!'

Maria Wingham, 58, explains how it took a mortifying moment to turn things around

BEFORE
19st 3lb
Size 24

As I boarded the plane in July 2023, I was so excited about the time my friends and I were going to have in Portugal. But as I sat down, I tried with all my might to fasten my seatbelt – I just couldn't get it to close. I weighed over 19st and was a size 24, and in full view of my friends and countless strangers, I meekly called over one of the cabin crew to request a seatbelt extender. She explained they didn't have one spare, and I'd need to sit in a different, larger seat. Standing up and shuffling off to another part of the plane was excruciatingly embarrassing – I wanted the ground to open up and swallow me. Though, in truth, relocating seats on a plane was the least of my problems when it came to my weight.

Back when I was 18, I'd been diagnosed with stage 4 Hodgkin's Lymphoma. While an intensive course of chemotherapy had mercifully saved my life, the accompanying steroids meant I put on over two stone. Food became a way to comfort myself in the face of all I'd been through.

Meeting my husband Paul at a village dance, I learned he was a great cook and loved the fact I enjoyed my food. In the run up to our wedding five years later, I discovered I was expecting twins. Though having Natasha and James in 1996 was the greatest joy of my life, I forgot to focus on myself.

Around the twins and a demanding career as a hospital manager, whether I was snacking on chocolate or not didn't really seem to matter. Over the years, as my weight crept up, people would joke that Paul was a feeder. He'd serve me up huge portions of roast chicken and sausages followed by homemade crumble and custard. I loved every last bite but, in 2015, I realised I'd grown short of breath.

Scans showed the left side of my heart was effectively blocked and I was in heart failure at just 49. I was put on medication and told to change my diet, but I reverted to my old habits of big portions and sweet treats within weeks.

Then my mum and stepdad both tragically died from cancer and around the same time I was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. Natasha also got engaged which was finally something to look forward to after the tough time we'd had, but I dreaded being the big mother of the bride, yet I just couldn't stop myself. I was a food addict, and despite so many compelling reasons to lose weight, I buried my head in the sand and kept eating the same terrible diet.

And now, my very private struggles had become a very public walk of shame down the aisle of the plane. I knew I couldn't go on like this and after the holiday I confided in Natasha

Maria's (far left) health was failing her

She says she is proof it's never too late to change

AFTER
15st 3lb
Size 16-18

DIET BEFORE

BREAKFAST: Frosties with milk
LUNCH: Cheese and pickle sandwich, crisps, yogurt and chocolate
DINNER: Roast chicken with sausages and all the trimmings, then crumble and custard
SNACKS: Chocolate bars, cake, crisps, dips and peanuts

DIET AFTER

BREAKFAST: Fast pot porridge
LUNCH: Spaghetti Bolognese
DINNER: Chicken salad
SNACKS: None

about what had happened. She was blunt with me, saying she loved me and was really worried for my health. 'I don't want to lose you,' she said.

So, I began researching my options and found LighterLife. I knew I had a mountain to climb and needed a complete reset in my brain. I'd always worked well under pressure so, as my 59th birthday approached, I set myself a deadline – it was autumn, and I was determined to lose four stone by that Christmas when I'd be taking early retirement. *What better present to myself and to Paul as we enjoy our sunset years together?* I thought.

Finding Lisa, a local LighterLife consultant, I signed up to the meal replacement plan in September 2024. I lived on four meal replacement products a day, going from thousands of calories to just 800. Nobody believed I could do it, but I had a goal and didn't waiver once. The support I got from Lisa was incredible, as she combined CBT and mindfulness lessons, to give me the self-belief I needed to turn back the clock. I'd go to parties and be happy with just a glass of water.

When 2025 dawned, Paul and I celebrated on a Caribbean cruise. I'd lost the four stone I said I would, dropped four dress sizes from a 24 to a 16, and was on the way to reversing my diabetes. I'm now 15st and have maintained my weight loss ever since.

This June, I had the honour of watching my little girl marry the love of her life, Luke, in a beautiful ceremony by Lake Como. I was smiling like a Cheshire cat all day, when people complimented me saying how amazing I looked. But more importantly, I knew how proud Natasha was of me after all those years of nagging.

I now spend my days walking our dog, Stella, and renovating a smallholding in the countryside just outside Hull. Retirement is all I'd ever hoped for and more. Paul and I plan to travel lots more over the next few years and this time my only concern on the plane will be how soon we'll get there.

My life changed so much with just a few months of prioritising my health. I'm proof it's never too late to change.

By Miyo Padi and Matt Barbour.

What do you get when you cross Christmas with a magazine?

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Chic essentials

Top, 6-22, F&F at Tesco, £19.50

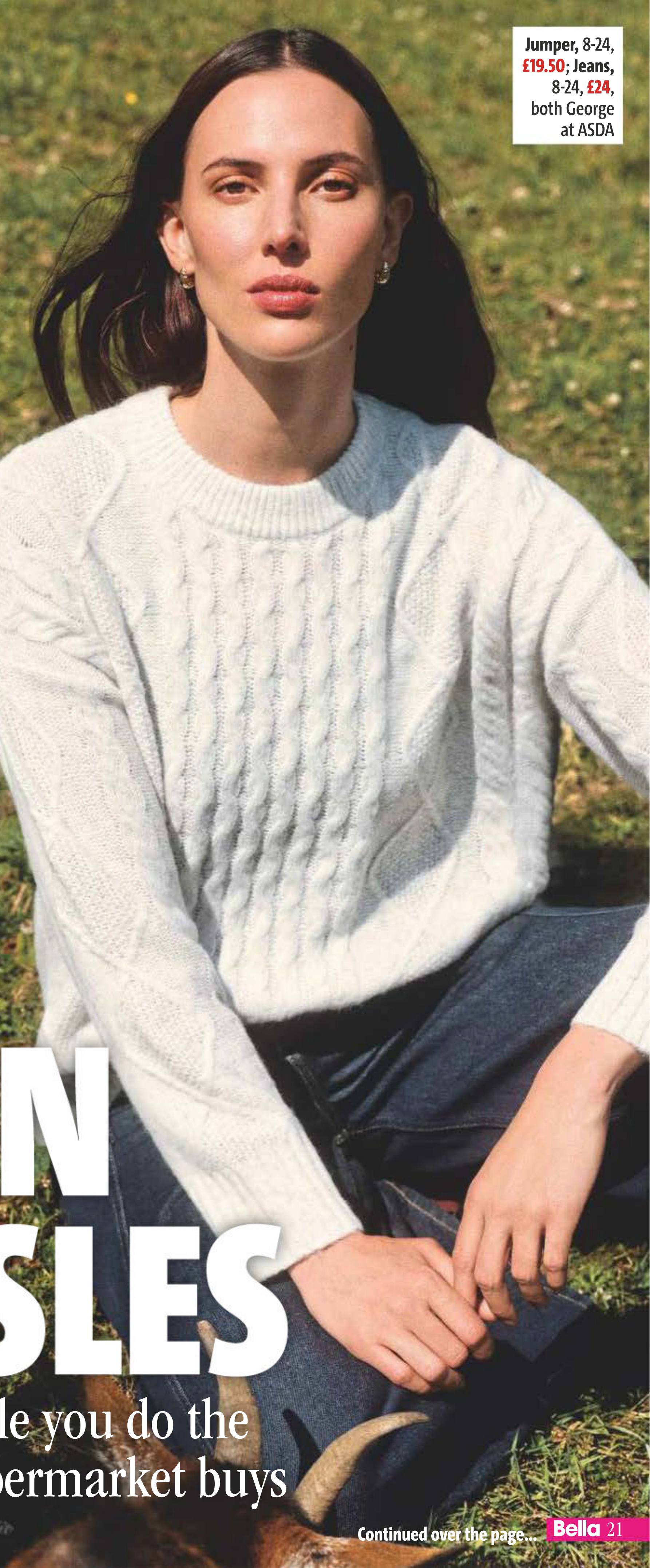
Jacket, 8-24, George at ASDA, £28

These sleek, tailored pieces look – and feel – far more expensive than their price tag!

Bag, Tu at Sainsbury's, £22

Trousers, 8-24, George at ASDA, £22

Shoes, F&F at Tesco, £26



Jumper, 8-24, £19.50; **Jeans,** 8-24, £24, both George at ASDA

STYLE IN THE AISLES

Update your wardrobe while you do the weekly shop with these supermarket buys

Continued over the page...

Dress, 8-22, Nutmeg at Morrisons, £22

Retro flair

Bag, George at ASDA, £20

Top, 6-24, Tu at Sainsbury's, £12.50

Jacket, 6-24, Tu at Sainsbury's, £45

Skirt, 6-22, F&F at Tesco, £27.50

Embrace this season's Seventies trend with plush faux fur and suede textures

Boots, Tu at Sainsbury's, £35

Suit up

Blazer, 6-24, Tu at Sainsbury's, £22.50

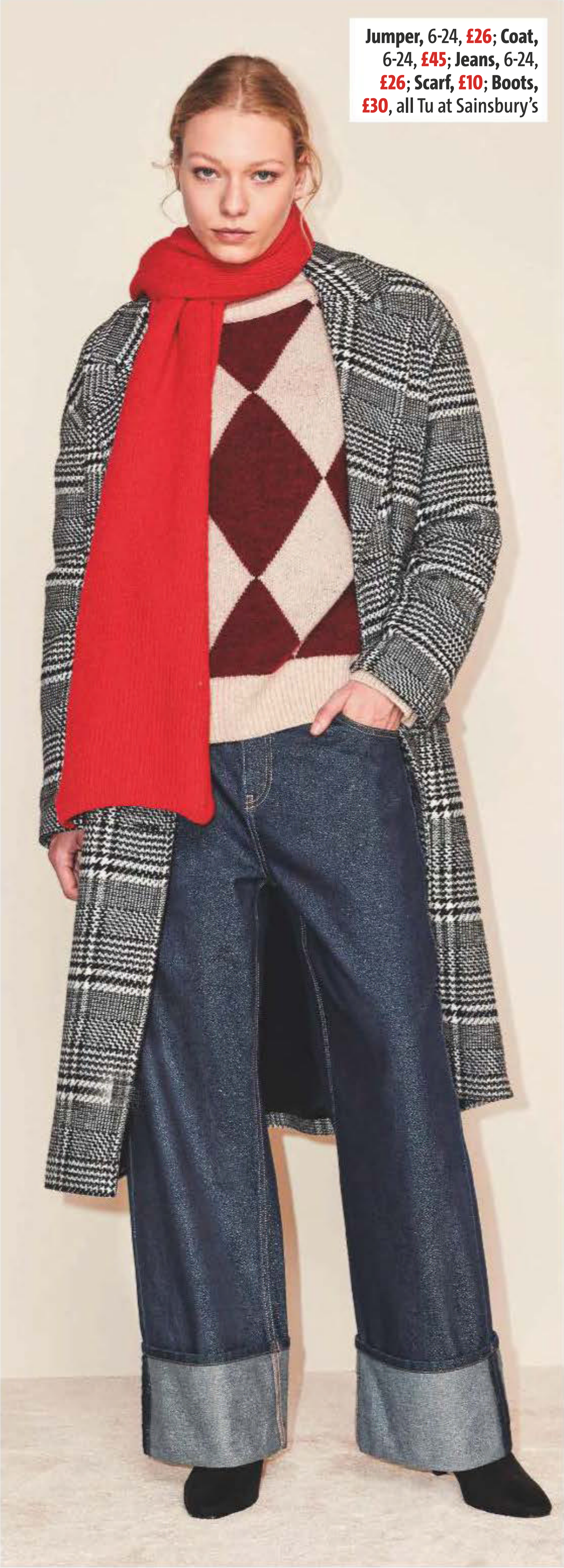
Neckerchief, George at ASDA, £8

Pair this blazer with jeans and trainers for an effortless off-duty look

Bag, George at ASDA, £22

Shoes, Tu at Sainsbury's, £17

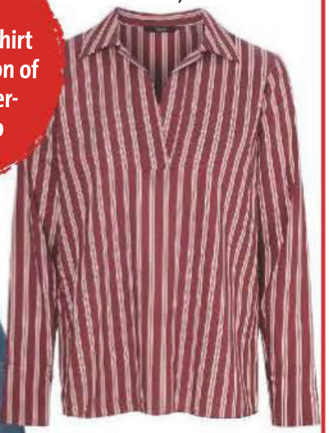
Trousers, 6-24, Tu at Sainsbury's, £22.50



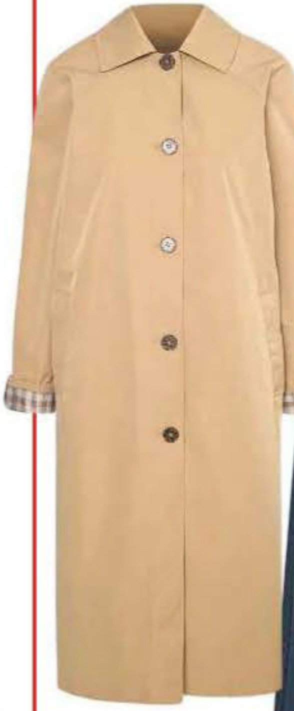
Jumper, 6-24, **£26**; **Coat,** 6-24, **£45**; **Jeans,** 6-24, **£26**; **Scarf, £10**; **Boots, £30**, all Tu at Sainsbury's

Get shirty

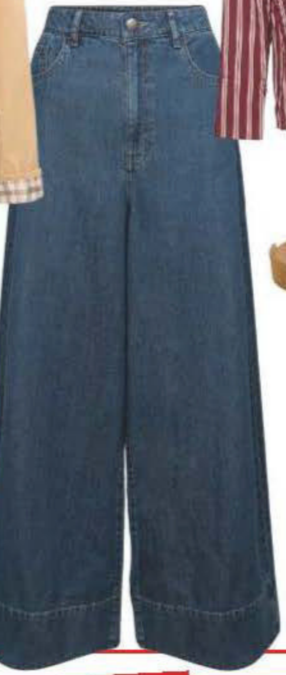
The vertical stripes on this shirt create the illusion of a longer, leaner-looking torso



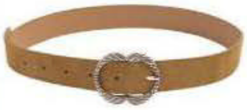
Shirt, 8-24, George at ASDA, **£16**



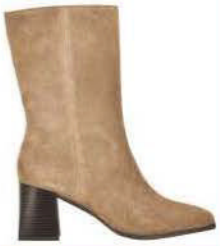
Coat, 8-24, George at ASDA, **£38**



Jeans, 8-22, Nutmeg at Morrisons, **£20**

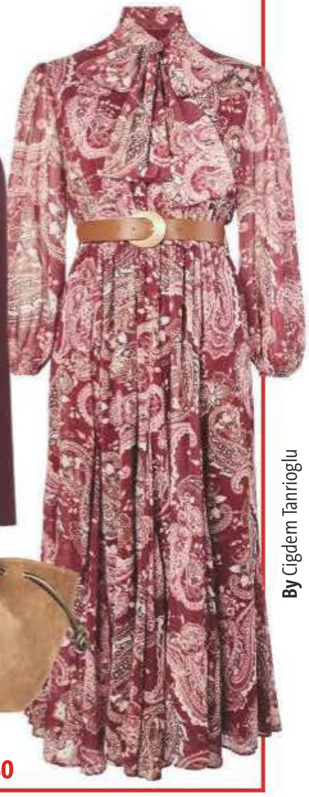


Belt, George at ASDA, **£12.50**

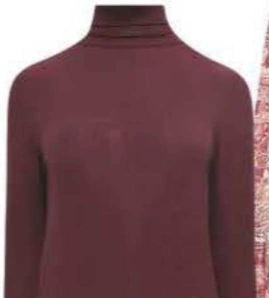


Boots, Tu at Sainsbury's, **£50**

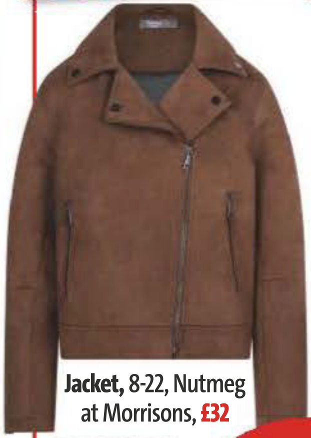
Fabulous frock



Dress, 8-24, Tu at Sainsbury's, **£40**

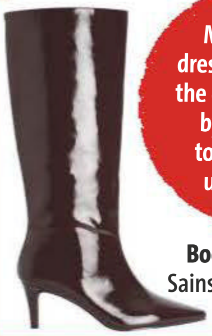


Top, 8-24, George at ASDA, **£12.50**

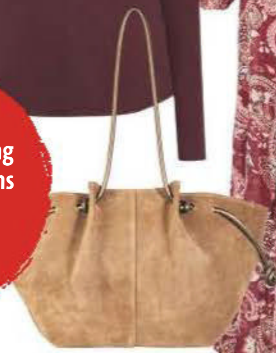


Jacket, 8-22, Nutmeg at Morrisons, **£32**

Make a midi dress work during the cooler months by layering a top or jumper underneath



Boots, Tu at Sainsbury's, **£38**



Bag, Tu at Sainsbury's, **£40**

By Cigdem Tanrioglu

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- Insiders reveal shock tension between Princess Catherine and Queen Camilla
- Our late Queen Elizabeth's iconic clothes are under the spotlight

PLUS, Diana's close friend tells us how she would have adored her grandchildren

ON SALE NOW!

Hat, Tu at Sainsbury's, **£6**

Bag, Monsoon, **£59**

Heels, Zara, **£35.99**

Very **berry**

Say hello to autumn with rich hues of burgundy, plum and mulberry

Catherine Zeta-Jones

Belt, Mango, **£15.99**

Necklace, John Lewis, **£24**

Earrings, H&M, **£12.99**

Gloves, Next, **£24**

Shoes, Marks & Spencer, **£26**

Bag, Bershka, **£35.99**

Boots, New Look, **£59.99**

Neckerchief, Acessorize, **£16**

Bow, Matalan, **£6**

Boots, Next, **£40**

By Lucy Brown, **Pictures** Getty

Beauty advent

The countdown is officially on for these festive treats

Worth £204.40

Liz Earle

Fans of Liz Earle's skincare will love this option. Not only does it contain a carefully curated selection of travel-friendly products, but it also includes five full-sized goodies – including the iconic Cleanse & Polish Hot Cloth Cleanser.

12 Days Of Liz Earle Beauty Advent Calendar, £79

The Fragrance Shop

Perfume lovers – be sure to snap up this luxurious find. Each day reveals a new scent, including a handful of full-sized bottles. Shoppers will also receive 20% off their next purchase, which will come in handy when gift shopping.

The Fragrance Shop Advent Calendar, £120 for members or £150 for non-members

Worth over £400

Worth £385

Next

Unwrap a daily dose of feel-good beauty with Next's offering, which covers everything from glow-boosting skincare to sensational fragrances. Plus, five lucky shoppers will have the chance to win a STYLPRO LED Face Mask by finding a golden ticket in their calendar.

Next 25 Days of Beauty Advent Calendar, £95

Worth £54.99

Lacura at Aldi

If you love the idea of opening a daily treat but don't want to break the bank, try this bargain option, which features 12 designer-inspired products. Grab it quickly, as we predict a sellout. Available from Sunday 26 October.

12 Days of Lacura Beauty Advent Calendar, £19.99

calendars 2025

Soap & Glory

These pretty pink boxes don't just look great, they also contain 24 sweetly scented surprises that are perfect for a pre-party pamper night, including an ultra-hydrating sheet mask that works wonders on parched skin. **Soap & Glory The House Of Glory! 24 Day Advent Calendar, £48**

Worth £92

Worth £189.50

L'Occitane

Bursting with nourishing ingredients, such as shea butter and sweet almond oil, this year's offering is a skin-loving winner. Choose from three options, depending on your budget, all with great savings. **L'Occitane Beauty Advent Calendar, £87**

No7

Celebrate all things beauty with No7's shimmery calendar. Jam-packed with plenty of anti-ageing essentials along with some very wearable make-up, it will have you looking and feeling great by 2026. **No7 25 Days of Beauty Advent Calendar, £60**

Worth £236

Worth, £120

The Body Shop

For feel-good beauty, look no further than The Body Shop's fruity selection. The 24 travel-friendly goodies, including a whole host of bodycare essentials, will make great stocking fillers, too. **The Body Shop Classic Beauty Advent Calendar, £60**

Worth £266

Benefit

Inspired by the retro Rubik's cube, Benefit's mood-boosting box is bursting with statement finds, including their much-loved Benetint and BADgal Bang! Mascara. It's the ultimate treat for any make-up lover. **Benefit Glam Cube 24-day Christmas Beauty Advent Calendar, £135**

Marks & Spencer

Indulge in a whole host of luxurious products with this stylish hamper from M&S, which was created by fashion designer Bella Freud. It includes everything a beauty lover needs, from haircare to make-up and more. **Marks & Spencer Advent Calendar, £60 when you spend £35 online or in-store**

Worth over £330

By Cigdem Tanrioglu

The Story People

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At 11, Christine could never have dreamt where life would take her and her German pen pal. But after 50 years of letters, there was a surprise in store.

Christine used The Story People to share their unlikely friendships story, and you can too.

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Autumnal TREATS

Spice up your beauty routine with these pumpkin-infused buys

Sugar Pumpkin
COSY HAND BALM
BAUME MAINS CONFORTABLE

Heal hands

We loved this softening balm's plush consistency and found that a penny-sized dollop was enough to make hands feel nourished. It also smells like a spiced pumpkin pie!
The Body Shop Sugar Pumpkin Hand Balm, £7

NAILBERRY
Paris - London
L'OXYGÉNÉ
Oxygenated Nail Lacquer

Nailed it

Switch up your mani for autumn with a fresh, orange shade. This polish is both long-lasting and ultra-pigmented, too.
Nailberry Oxygenated Nail Lacquer in Spontaneous, £17

1
2
3
Kate Somerville
ExfoliKate
PUMPKIN ENZYME MASK
ELEMIS
Superfood

1. Kate Somerville's resurfacing scrub promotes radiant skin using a formula powered by pumpkin.
Kate Somerville Exfolikate Resurfacing Body Scrub, £51
2. A sweetly scented three-in-one mask that enhances radiance with revitalising pumpkin enzymes.
Peter Thomas Roth Enzyme Mask, £61
3. This cleansing butter tackles impurities to promote a glowing complexion.
Elemis Superfood AHA Glow Cleansing Butter, £30

047
PUMPKIN CRÈME
EAU DE PARFUM
LE MONDE GOURMAND

Sweet scent

This indulgent fragrance has a layered mix of notes, including pumpkin spice, nutmeg, frothed milk, sandalwood and musk. It's warm, long-lasting and delicious.
Le Monde Gourmand Pumpkin Crème Eau De Parfum, £24

Rare Beauty

Make cheeks pop

This autumnal liquid blush delivers a flattering seasonal hue while nourishing and hydrating, thanks to its lightweight, non-sticky formula.
Rare Beauty Soft Pinch Liquid Blush, £24

Shady lady

Whether matte or shimmery, these eyeshadows from e.l.f. are rich, creamy and blendable, and the tiny compact is the perfect size for your handbag.
e.l.f. Bite-Size Eyeshadow Palette in Pumpkin Pie, £5

LANEIGE
LIP SLEEPING MASK
MASQUE DE NUIT POUR LES LÈVRES
PUMPKIN PIE
TARTE CITROUILLE
Net wt. 0.70 oz. / Poids net 20 g

Pillow pout

This limited-edition mask leaves lips with a comforting spiced scent while softening with coconut oil, shea butter, and berry fruit complex.
Laneige Lip Sleeping Mask Limited Edition in Pumpkin Pie, £21

By Phoebe Denman. **Pictures** Marco Vittur

Lose fat, KEEP MUSCLE

The revamped diet celebs are going crazy for

The alkaline diet, which waned in popularity years ago due to its vague detox claims, is back with a bang with exciting new science-backed research. This proves it's a great way to de-stress the body and burn fat while preserving muscle (essential for keeping the metabolism healthy) and is particularly helpful for those aged 40 and above, when muscle loss can be an issue. Celebrities said to enjoy the many benefits of alkaline eating include Gwyneth Paltrow, 53, Elle Macpherson, 61, Jennifer Aniston, 56, and Kirsten Dunst, 43. Here's how to put this plan into action for amazing results.

Jennifer Aniston is said to enjoy alkaline eating

Beat the acid, lose the weight

'The low-grade metabolic acidosis caused by acidic foods such as meat, dairy, and refined grains, triggers the release of cortisol, a stress hormone that has many negative health and weight-related effects, and an alkaline diet may help correct this effectively,' says endocrinologist, Dr Hana Kahleova, Director of Clinical Research at PCRM (Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine). 'Our research found that the decrease in dietary acid load for those following a low-fat vegan diet was associated with weight loss, independent of energy intake. Essentially, the more alkaline foods you eat, the easier it is for the body to shed excess fat, without muscle loss.' She notes that top alkalising foods, like broccoli, lentils, chickpeas, peas, beans, soy, quinoa and millet, are rich in protein, helping the body maintain and grow muscle while reducing inflammation that leads to fat gain. When these foods replace animal products, they cut a major source of dietary fat. Choosing alkaline foods, such as fruits, vegetables and legumes, further reduces inflammation linked to weight gain and disease. A plant-based diet is higher in fibre, is cholesterol-free and lower in saturated fat, supporting weight loss and lowering risks of diabetes, heart disease, cancer and other conditions. Research also shows that ageing makes the pH balance more acidic. 'The good news for women as they age is that our research shows a low-fat vegan diet isn't just beneficial for keeping your diet more alkaline – it can also help fight hot flushes and lead to weight-loss,' says Dr Hana.

Get a balance

The modern alkaline diet is based on a measurable concept called Potential Renal Acid Load (PRAL). 'Dietary acid load – how acidic or alkaline your diet is – is commonly estimated by PRAL, which is an estimation of the effect of foods on acidity or alkalinity of the body based on five nutrient values: protein, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium and calcium. A higher PRAL score indicates a more acidic diet; a lower score indicates a more alkaline diet,' says Dr Hana. 'Replacing animal products (which have a higher PRAL) with plant-based foods (which have a lower PRAL) reduces dietary acid load, along with many other health benefits.' Although the research focuses on plant-based eating, you don't need to fully switch to benefit. 'The aim isn't to only eat alkaline foods – it's more like a slight shift towards the alkaline eating that we need,' explains Dr Hana. For instance, try one or two plant-based meals a day, or dedicate a few days a week to a plant-based diet.

Top alkalising foods to try

As for top alkalising foods, Dr Hana recommends eating more vegetables, particularly leafy greens, broccoli, beets, asparagus, garlic, carrots and cabbage; fruits, such as berries, apples, cherries, apricots or cantaloupe; legumes, for example lentils, chickpeas, peas, beans or soy; and unrefined grains, such as quinoa or millet.

How to eat the alkalising way

Here are three days of plant-based meals, from the PCRM (pcrm.org), to show you how easy it is to follow a nutritious plant-based diet. If you fancy a mid-day snack or dessert, enjoy some fresh fruit, or carrot and apple slices – perfect to help satisfy sugar cravings too.

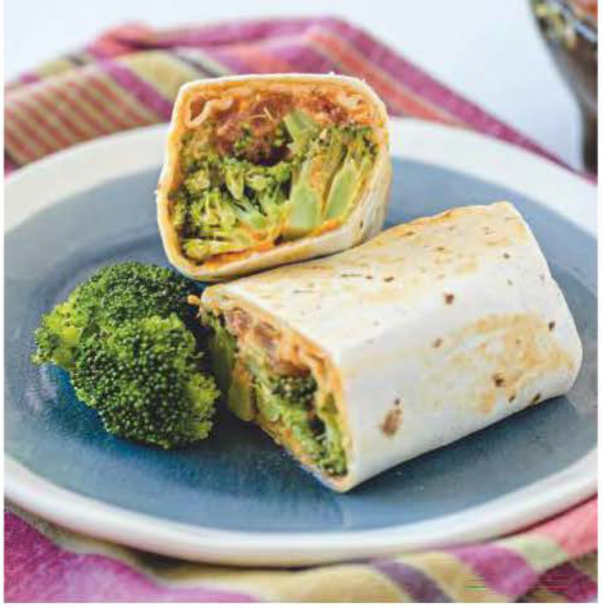
Day 1

BREAKFAST

Baked oatmeal cups

Makes 5 servings 436 calories, 10.2g protein, 89.1g carbs, 6.1g fat, 10.8g fibre per serving

Continued over the page...



Line a muffin pan with 15 cupcake liners. Preheat the oven to 180C/gas 4. In a large bowl mix 245g rolled oats, 55g oat flour, 3tbsp milled linseed, 1tbsp ground cinnamon and season. Mash 4 ripe bananas and add 80ml brown rice syrup and 55g raisins. Stir until thoroughly combined. Place around 60ml of the batter into each muffin cup. Bake for 20min. Remove and cool in the pan for 5min, then transfer to a cooling rack. Store in an airtight container in the fridge.

LUNCH

Very fast veggie lentil soup

Makes 12 servings 129 calories, 7g protein, 23g carbs, 2g fat, 6g fibre per serving

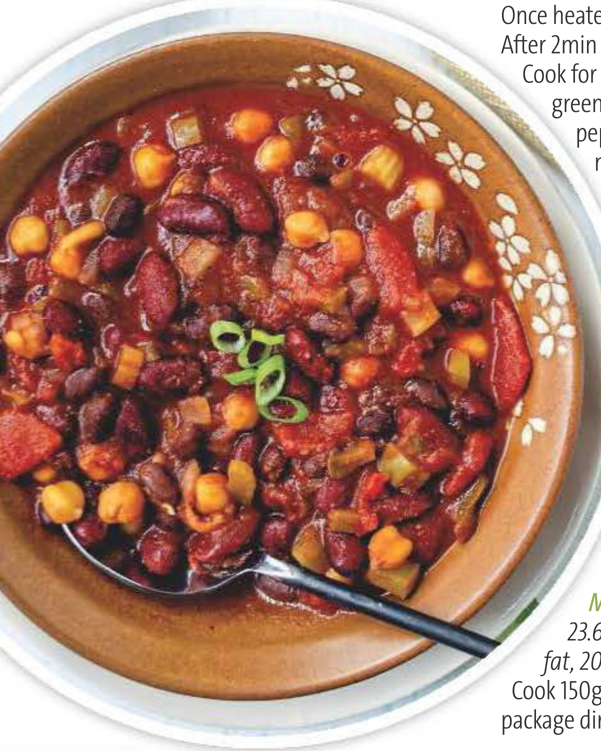
In a large stockpot, heat 1tbsp olive oil over a medium heat. Add 1 diced onion, 2 thinly sliced celery stalks, 2 peeled and thinly sliced carrots and sauté for 3min. Add 4 minced garlic cloves and sauté for 1min. Add 1.4l low-salt vegetable broth and 1 russet potato, skin on and cut into small cubes, and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and continue to cook, covered, for 8min. Add 180g sweetcorn, 200g broccoli cut into little florets, 2 drained tins of brown lentils, tin of tomatoes, 50g roughly chopped kale, 1tsp dried oregano, 1tsp salt and ½tsp black pepper. Simmer for 4min. Serve with a slice of wholegrain bread.

DINNER

Three-bean chilli

Makes 6 servings 259 calories, 14g protein, 47g carbs, 3g fat, 16g fibre

Heat 2tbsp olive oil in a large pot over a medium heat. Add 2 thinly sliced stalks of celery, 1 diced onion, 1 diced seeded green bell pepper and sauté for 5min. Add a tin of drained chickpeas, a tin of drained black beans, a tin of drained red kidney beans, 2 tins of chopped tomatoes and 425g passata. Bring to a simmer, cover, then simmer for another 10min, stirring occasionally. Add 1tbsp chilli powder, 1tsp garlic powder, 2tsp ground cumin, ½tsp each of salt and ground black pepper. Mix well. Serve with cooked quinoa for a protein boost.



Day 2

BREAKFAST

Tofu scramble

Makes 4 servings 108 calories, 10g protein, 9.2g carbs, 4.6g fat, 4.2g fibre per serving

Add 60ml water to a large frying pan. Once heated add 120g diced onion. After 2min add 1 clove minced garlic. Cook for 2min then add 120g diced green pepper, 120g diced red peppers, 180g chopped mushrooms. Add a splash of water if needed. Cook for 4min. Crumble 434g extra-firm tofu into the pan along with ¼tsp turmeric powder, 1tsp cumin powder, and a pinch of salt and pepper. Cook for 6min. Serve with wholegrain toast or a warm corn tortilla.

LUNCH

Bean pasta salad

Makes 4 servings 496 calories, 23.6g protein, 97.5g carbs 5.2g fat, 20.2g fibre per serving

Cook 150g farfalle pasta according to package directions. Rinse with cold water, drain and place in a large bowl. Soften 2 sundried tomatoes by soaking them in 120ml boiling water for 15min. Drain and chop. Add to the pasta along with 50g finely chopped spring onions, half a seeded and diced red pepper, 400g tin artichoke hearts in brine, drained and quartered, 280g tin kidney beans, drained, 30ml each of finely chopped fresh parsley and 240ml fat-free Italian salad dressing. Toss to mix.

DINNER

Broccoli burritos

Makes 4 servings 305 calories, 14.7g protein, 57.6 carbs. 4.1g fat, 11g fibre per serving

Cut 2 broccoli stalks into florets. Peel the stalks and cut into 1.3cm rounds. Steam over boiling water for 5min. Add 254g cooked chickpeas into a blender with 80g roasted red peppers and 2tbsp tahini and 3tbsp lemon juice. Process until smooth. Spread a quarter of the mixture onto a wholewheat tortilla and place in a large heated frying pan. Heat for 2min. Arrange a line of cooked broccoli down the centre, then sprinkle with 1¼tbsp salsa. Roll the tortilla around the filling and remove from the heat. Repeat with the remaining tortillas. Serve warm.

Day 3

BREAKFAST

Glow bowl morning smoothie

Serves 1 344 calories, 7g protein, 76g carbs, 5g fat and 14g fibre

Add 26g chopped kale, 50g baby spinach, 1 cored and chopped apple, 1tbsp chia seeds, 1 frozen banana, juice of 1 orange and 60ml unsweetened plain oat milk, to a blender. Blend until smooth and creamy. Transfer to a bowl and top with 35g raspberries and 40g blueberries, a sprinkling of hemp seeds and a sprig or two of mint.

LUNCH

Sloppy Joes

Makes 4 servings 462 calories, 25g protein, 80g carbs, 7g fat, 17g fibre per serving

Heat 1tbsp olive oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Add 1 small diced onion, 1 diced green bell pepper and sauté for 4min. Heat to medium, add 2 drained and rinsed cans of green lentils, mix well, and cook for 2min. Add 425g passata, 2tbsp dark brown sugar, ½tsp garlic powder, 2tsp ground cumin, 1tbsp chilli powder, and salt and ground black pepper to taste. Mix well and simmer for 5min. Serve in wholemeal rolls.

DINNER

Herbed white bean and quinoa bowl

Makes 4 servings 582 calories, 20g protein, 85g carbs, 20g fat, 18g fibre per serving

Add 700ml water to a large pan, with 1tsp olive oil and ¼tsp salt. Bring to the boil. Meanwhile, dry-roast 285g tricolour quinoa in a frying pan, stirring until fragrant. Add it to a pan of boiling water and cook until the liquid is all absorbed, around 14min. Cover and set aside. Add 120ml water to a saucepan with a lid over a medium heat, bring to a simmer. Add 75g finely chopped carrot and 300g peeled and diced beetroot (ideally golden if you can get them), cook, covered, for 5min. Strain off the water and add 1tbsp olive oil, 1 finely chopped fennel bulb, ½tsp salt, ¼tsp ground black pepper, and the carrot and beetroot mixture. Cook for 8min. Transfer the cooked quinoa into a large bowl and add ½tsp salt, ¼tsp ground black pepper, 1tbsp brown rice syrup, juice of 2 lemons, zest of 1 lemon and 2tbsp olive oil. Stir and add in a tin of drained haricot beans. Served topped with the veg and garnish with a few slices of cucumber, fresh mint and chives and 1tbsp toasted sunflower seeds per plate.

By Julia Smurthwaite, **Pictures** Getty, shutterstock

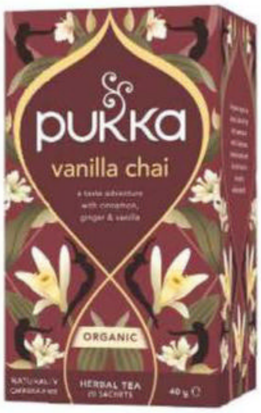
NB. If you are pregnant, breastfeeding, under 18 or have a medical condition please seek professional advice before changing your diet.

eat smart

Winter warmers

Cosy up during the colder months with a hot drink…

Apple Strudel Flavour Hot Chocolate, whittard.co.uk, **£11.95**



Pukka Vanilla Chai, Tesco, **£4.75**

Instant Toffee Nut Flavour Latte Sachets, M&S, **£3.75**

Pumpkin Spice Cake Capsules, Nespresso, **£5.50**

Celebrations Hot Chocolate Selection, Home Bargains, **£3.49**

Perfect Ted Blueberry Matcha, Sainsbury's, **£9.95**

Drink Me Chai Dirty Chai Latte, Tesco, **£3.65**

Baby Spice Loose Tea, Bird & Blend, **£7.75**

Cinnamon Bun Matcha, Bird & Blend, **£22**

Yorkshire Tea Malty Biscuit Brew, Morrisons, **£2.50**

Little's Rich Hazelnut Flavour Infused Instant Coffee, Ocado, **£4.25**

Spiced Winter Red Tea, teapigs.co.uk, **£5.49**

Horlicks Chocolate, Sainsbury's, **£4**

By Lucy Brown

Happy birthday, Mary!

Celebrate Mary Berry's 90th with the baking queen's classic puds

Fabulous chocolate & cherry cake

Serves 8-10 Takes 55min, plus cooling

- **225g baking spread, straight from the fridge, plus extra for greasing**
- **55g cocoa powder, sifted**
- **4 large eggs**
- **225g caster sugar**
- **225g self-raising flour**
- **1tsp baking powder**

FOR THE FILLING

- **300ml pouring double cream, lightly whipped**
- **6 generous tbsp cherry jam**

FOR THE GANACHE

- **200ml pouring double cream**
- **200g Bournville chocolate, broken into pieces**

1 *Preheat the oven to 180°C/fan 160°C. Grease and base line 2 x 20cm loose-bottomed sandwich tins.*

2 *To make the ganache, measure the cream and chocolate into a glass bowl. Place the bowl over a pan of simmering water and heat until runny. Remove from the heat and leave to cool in a cold place until thick and stiff.*

3 *Meanwhile, measure the cocoa powder into a large bowl with 6tbsp boiling water. Mix to a paste. Add all the remaining cake ingredients and whisk together until light and fluffy using an electric hand whisk.*

4 *Divide the cake mixture between the tins and level the tops. Bake in the preheated oven for about 25-30min until well risen and shrinking away from the sides of the tin. Leave to cool in the tins for a few min, then transfer the cakes to a wire rack to finish cooling.*

5 *Place one of the cakes upside down on a board. Spread the cherry jam over the surface and top with the whipped cream. Place the second cake on top. Spread the ganache icing over the top of the cake and swirl to make a pretty design.*

Carrot cake with frosting

Serves 8-10 Takes 1hr, plus cooling

- 250ml sunflower oil, plus extra for greasing
- 4 large eggs
- 175g caster sugar
- 75g light muscovado sugar
- 1tsp vanilla extract
- 2 ripe bananas, mashed
- 150g carrots, peeled and roughly grated
- 275g self-raising flour
- 2tsp baking powder
- 1tsp ground cinnamon
- 1tsp ground ginger
- ½tsp mixed spice
- 55g walnuts or pecans, finely chopped, plus a few extra for decoration

FOR THE CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

- 250g butter, softened
- 2tsp vanilla extract
- 350g icing sugar
- 350g full-fat soft cheese

1 *Preheat the oven to 180°C/fan 160°C Fan. Grease and line the bases of 2 x 20cm loose-bottomed sandwich tins.*

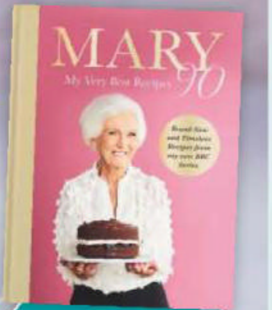
2 *Break the eggs into a large bowl and beat with a fork to break up. Add the caster and muscovado sugar, oil and vanilla and mix well.*

3 *Add the remaining ingredients to the bowl and whisk using an electric hand whisk until just combined. Be careful not to over beat.*

4 *Divide the mixture between the two tins and level the surface. Bake in the oven for about 35-40min until well risen and lightly golden. Leave to cool in the tins for 10min, then transfer to a wire rack.*

5 *Meanwhile, make the frosting. Measure the butter, vanilla and icing sugar into a large bowl and whisk using an electric hand whisk until combined. Add the soft cheese and beat until creamy and light.*

6 *Peel the paper from the bases of the sponges and invert one onto a plate. Spread with frosting. Place the other cake on top and use the remaining frosting to cover the top and sides, leaving a pretty swirl on top. Decorate with walnuts or pecans to serve.*



This recipe is taken from ***Mary 90: My Very Best Recipes* by Mary Berry** (BBC Books, £28)

Lemon meringue pie

Serves 8 Takes 1hr 25min, plus chilling and setting

FOR THE SWEET SHORTCRUST PASTRY

- 175g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- 100g butter, cubed
- 2tbsp icing sugar
- 1 egg, beaten

FOR THE LEMON FILLING

- Finely grated zest and juice of 3 large lemons
- 75g caster sugar
- 40g cornflour
- 4 large egg yolks

FOR THE MERINGUE

- 4 large egg whites
- 200g caster sugar

1 *First, make the pastry. Measure the flour, butter and icing sugar into a food processor. Whiz until it resembles breadcrumbs. Add the egg and whiz again until the pastry comes together, being careful not to overmix. Roll the pastry into a ball.*

2 *Lightly dust a work surface with flour and roll the dough out thinly until slightly larger than a 23cm fluted loose-bottomed tart tin. Carefully line the base and sides of the tin with the pastry. Prick the base with a fork and chill in the fridge or freezer for at least 30min.*

3 *Preheat the oven to 200°C/fan 180°C. Line the pastry case with non-stick baking paper and fill with baking beans. Place the tart tin on a baking sheet and bake for about 15min. Remove the beans and paper, and bake for another 5-10min, or until it is golden and crisp.*

4 *Reduce the oven to 160°C/fan 140°C. Meanwhile, to make the lemon filling, measure the lemon zest and juice, caster sugar and cornflour into a saucepan, and mix well. Gradually pour in 300ml cold water, stirring all the time, then whisk over a medium heat until thickened. Remove from the heat.*

5 *Beat the egg yolks with a small whisk, then add to the lemon mixture in the pan, which will have cooled slightly. Whisk well again. Pour into the pastry case and set aside.*

6 *For the meringue, place the egg whites in a large mixing bowl and whisk with an electric hand whisk until it looks like cloud. Gradually add the caster sugar, a dessertspoon at a time, until glossy and shiny. Spoon on top of the lemon filling and swirl the top. Bake for about 35min until the meringue is a pale straw colour but is still soft in the middle. Set aside for 1hr.*

7 *Remove the pie from the tin and serve ideally warm or cold, but not hot or the lemon filling will be too runny.*

By Hayley Merrick **Recipes** Mary Berry **Pictures** Tara Fisher, Shutterstock

Just a bad PERIOD?

Women with endometriosis are being fobbed off when they desperately need help

Imagine a condition where you are doubled up with pain each month, bleeding heavily. You're bloated and stuck on the loo with either constipation or diarrhoea. There are mood swings and often pain during sex – even fertility issues. And when you ask your doctor for help, there's no definitive diagnoses and little in the way of treatment.

Gynaecologist Tania Adib

If you're one of the 1.5 million women in the UK coping with endometriosis, you won't have to imagine.

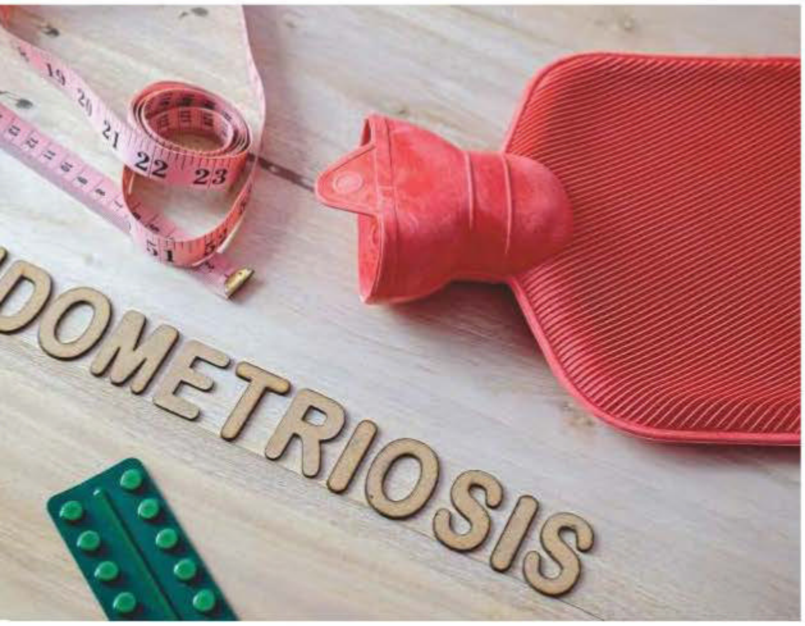
'Endometriosis occurs when tissue, similar to that which lines the inside of your uterus, grows in other places, often the pelvis, ovaries, bladder and fallopian tubes,' explains gynaecologist Dr Tania Adib (adib.org.uk). 'Endometrial tissue can grow anywhere. In rare cases, it has been found in the lungs and even the brain. The cause of endometriosis is unknown.'

Hormonal balance

While there is currently no cure for the condition, new treatments have been developed and doctors can advise on the management of symptoms. 'Women with endometriosis will often have low progesterone levels – the hormone that balances oestrogen and keeps it in check,' explains Dr Tania. 'Oestrogen "feeds" the condition, encouraging endometrial tissue to grow. Progesterone can stop the progression. Some of the treatments include synthetic progestin, such as Zalkya (dienogest), the Mirena coil, the mini-pill and the combined oral contraceptive pill. There's also a new oral contraceptive pill called Ryeqo, which puts the body into a type of "medical menopause" while simultaneously delivering hormone replacement therapy (HRT). It blocks the hormones that contribute to the condition while providing replacement hormones that allow the body to continue to function properly.'

> 'Oestrogen "feeds" the condition'

Endometriosis flares typically start between one and two weeks



The symptoms can be debilitating

before the period starts, during ovulation and also around the period. Hormonal changes increase inflammation in the endometrial tissue – although it can also cause symptoms at other times – hence the condition has often been dismissed as simply part and parcel of periods.

'Sometimes, endometriosis is called "a bad period", but it's so much more than that,' says nurse Zoe Lapwood, an adviser from endometriosis-uk.org. 'For some, symptoms are minimal, for others they can be completely debilitating – with one in six sufferers reporting having to leave the workplace due to their condition. Common symptoms include pelvic pain, painful periods that interfere with everyday life, heavy menstrual bleeding, pain during or after sex, painful bowel movements, pain when urinating, and difficulty getting pregnant. Fatigue is often an issue, along with one or more of the above symptoms.'

Fight for a diagnosis

Zoe says research shows it takes on average nearly nine years to get a diagnosis of endometriosis in the UK. 'Not enough healthcare practitioners recognise the symptoms of endometriosis, which results in people not getting on the right pathway,' says Zoe. 'We are campaigning for the government to introduce mandatory education for all healthcare practitioners, including GPs, gynaecologists, A&E doctors and sonographers, to recognise the symptoms of endometriosis and other menstrual health conditions.'

Diagnosis of endometriosis is not straightforward. Scans can indicate the condition, but doctors can only confirm it with a surgical procedure. 'Symptoms can overlap with those of other conditions,' says Dr Tania. 'Medical history, blood tests and examinations will be taken into consideration. Specialist scanning can suggest endometriosis, but a laparoscopy – an operation in which a camera (a laparoscope) is inserted into the pelvis via a small incision so the exterior of the uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes and other structures within the pelvis can be viewed – will confirm the diagnosis.'

New technology may make diagnosis easier in the future. French researchers have developed a saliva test known as the Ziwig Endotest, which has shown 97.4% sensitivity and 93.5% specificity in detecting all forms of endometriosis. However, some experts say more research is needed. It's not currently available from the NHS, but can be privately prescribed. It comes with a hefty £995 price tag.

Zoe adds, 'Right now, there isn't sufficient capacity, resourcing and funding within the NHS to treat endometriosis patients, and the Government needs to ensure that support is greatly improved. Gynaecology waiting times also remain unacceptably high, and these must urgently come down.'

But knowledge is power – and there are ways to ease symptoms. The first step is talking to your GP. 'Keep a pain and symptoms diary with all of your symptoms,' suggests Zoe. 'Endometriosis UK has a template symptoms diary, a symptoms checker that generates a letter for you to take to your GP appointment highlighting your symptoms.'

Still not feeling heard? 'Ask for a referral to a gynaecologist at your next GP appointment. Don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion or to speak to a different GP, and you can contact Endometriosis UK – we have a nurse-led helpline,' says Zoe. 'Always trust your own body. Don't give up fighting for answers – someone out there will listen.'

> 'It takes, on average, nearly nine years to get a diagnosis'

A healthy diet can ease symptoms

LIFESTYLE TWEAKS

So what can people dealing with endometriosis symptoms do to help themselves? 'Following an antioxidant diet (rich in plant foods, such as fruit, vegetables and leafy greens) is associated with an easing of symptoms,' says Dr Tania. 'Healthy fats like omega-3 fatty acids in salmon, tuna, and walnuts can also help. Avoid processed foods that contain trans fats – one study found that women who ate the highest amounts of trans fats had a 48% increased risk of endometriosis. Cutting out gluten and alcohol may help. Exercise aids pain relief. Opt for paraben-free soaps and cosmetics. Parabens are chemicals commonly used as preservatives in cosmetic products and are "endocrine disruptors", which can alter our body's hormone levels.'

By Lucy Hunter, **Pictures** Shutterstock; The Face

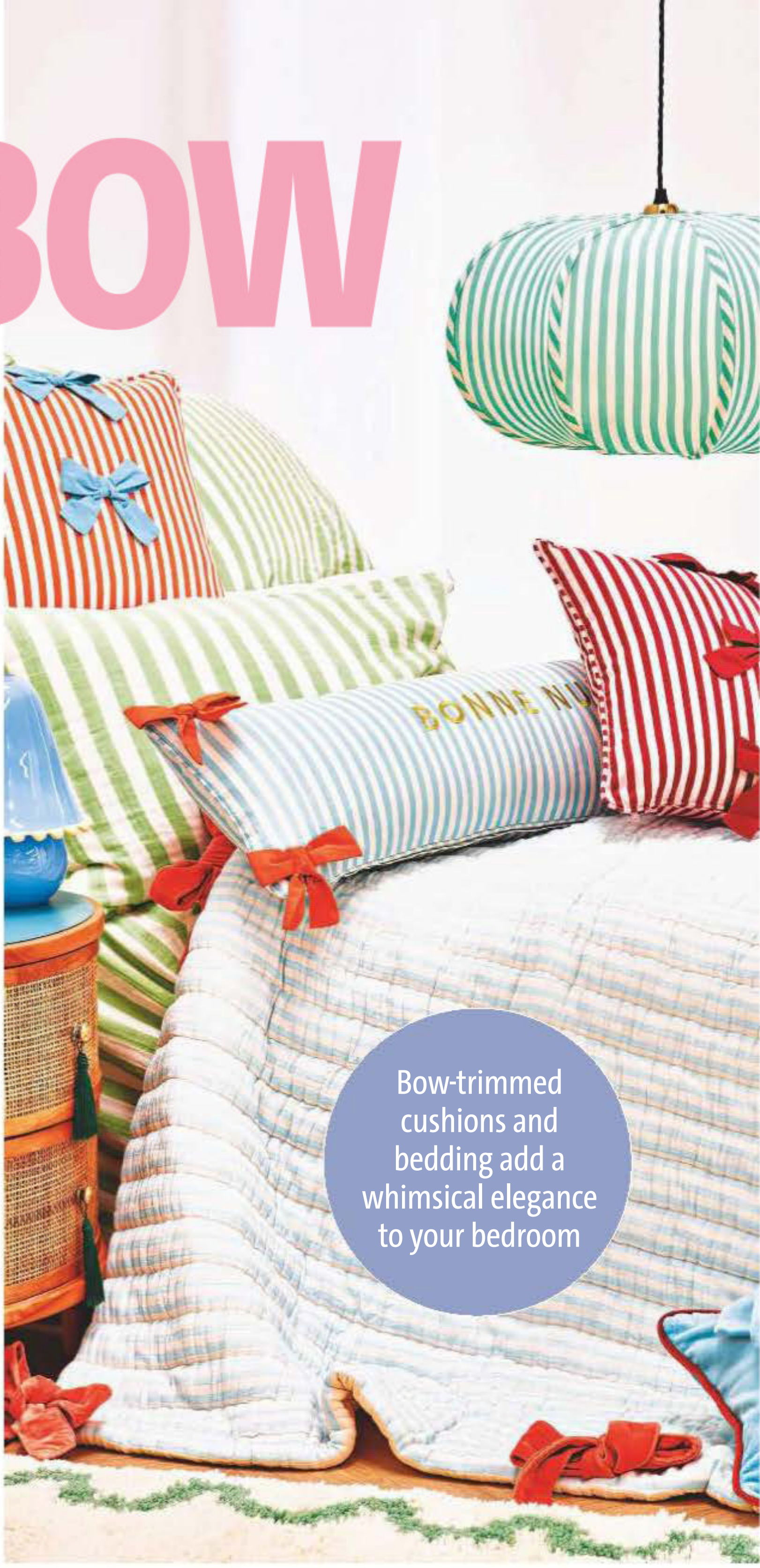
Take A BOW

Tie your space together with these bow-tiful buys

Duvet cover set, H&M, from £49.99

Candles, Primark, £3.50 for two

Mug, £12; **Plate,** £14, both Anthropologie



Bow-trimmed cushions and bedding add a whimsical elegance to your bedroom

Glass straws, B&M, £3 for six

Cushion, Matalan, £13

By Emma White

Orange stripe cotton bow cushion cover, £29.50; **Bonnie nuit bow bolster cushion cover,** £35; **Burgundy stripe cotton bow cushion cover,** £29.50; **Blue velvet bow cushion cover,** £29.50; **Blue stripe & bows reversible quilted bedspread,** £175, all Oliver Bonas

Vase, Anthropologie, £48

Throw, Oliver Bonas, £39.50

Glasses, Anna + Nina at aboutliving.co.uk, £30 for two

Mug, Flying Tiger, £6

Lamp, Oliver Bonas, £75

Napkin rings, H&M, £9.99 for four

Cake serve set, Anthropologie, £42

Frame, Marks & Spencer, £9.50

Bowls, John Lewis, £8 for two

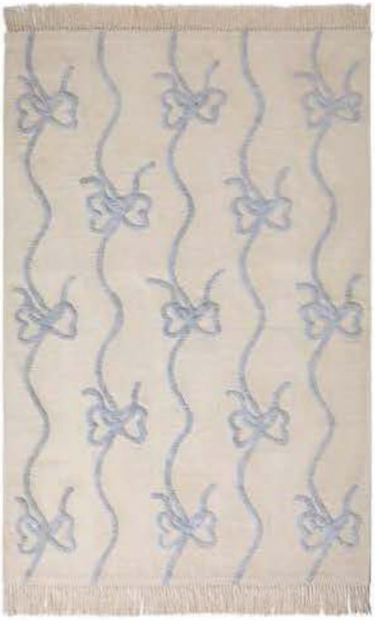
Glass, Marks & Spencer, £15 for two

Green & cream bow cotton towel range, from £4; **Green bow bath mat,** £10, both George Home

Bring boutique charm to the bathroom with bow-detailed towels and mats

Candlestick holders, Marks & Spencer, £10 for two

Rug, Cath Kidston at Next, from £50



THE DARKEST CRIMES AND EVIL MINDS

CRIME MONTHLY

KILLER GRANNY PLOTS MURDER OF SON-IN-LAW
CELESTE RIVAS MYSTERY
HOW DID SHE END UP DEAD IN SINGER'S CAR?
'INCEST BLOOD CULT'
TEEN FORCED TO MARRY UNCLE AND HIS TWO WIVES
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THE DARKEST CRIMES AND EVIL MINDS
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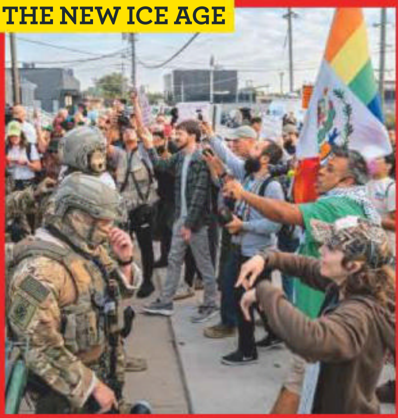

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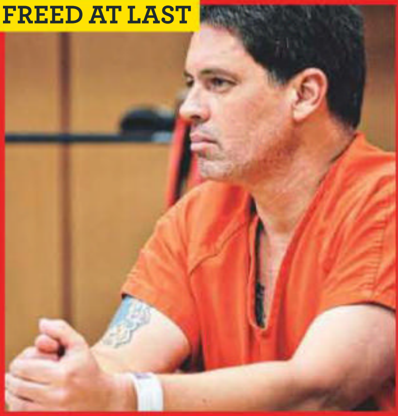

TRAIN HORRORS

Iryna Zarutska
22.05.2002 - 22.08.2025

ISSUE 81 ON SALE 23 OCT

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Star letter

Tragic loss

My heart ached for Lorraine when I read her extremely sad story, ‘My girl was found dead on her 18th birthday’ (issue 40). I admire her so much for setting up the Ellie Soutter Foundation to help winter sports athletes achieve their dreams by supporting them financially and emotionally to honour her daughter Ellie. It’s crucial that effective mental health support is provided for children and young people.

Jana Aitchison, Wirral

New joy

How great it is to see Davina McCall looking so happy after all she has been through (issue 38). Recovering from brain surgery would have knocked the confidence of the strongest individual, but instead of moping around, she’s returned to screens in *Long Lost Family* and *Stranded On Honeymoon Island*. And now she’s engaged. She deserves all the happiness.

Jenny Beeson, Norwich

Talking point

A woman went viral after admitting that she and her husband pre-plan their intimacy. While some agreed this was necessary for couples with busy schedules, others argued it turned passion into a ‘chore’. So we ask… should you schedule sex?

Absolutely not! My partner and I will get intimate whenever we feel like it. We don’t need a timetable to tell us how and when to feel sexy.
Caroline, Borehamwood

Schedules are for appointments, meetings and other responsibilities, not our love lives. Spontaneity is key to our relationship and we aim to keep it that way.
Lena, Glamorgan

With young kids, finding time for each other can be difficult, especially by the end of the week. So it’s nice to know that we have an allocated night of passion – though we fit in more if we can!
Lucy, Edinburgh

Fitting in sex in our timetable can seem like another duty, but I think it stops my man from cheating.
Sabrina, Wirral

By Shereen Low, **Pictures** Getty, Shloer, Shutterstock

THIS WEEK Bella LOVES…

Shloer Pink Boobly

Drink up and raise a glass of Shloer Pink Bubbly to a fab cause. The sparkling grape drink has been given a playful makeover for Breast Cancer Awareness Month, with illustrator Emmy Lupin’s boob-tiful design celebrating breasts of all shapes and sizes. Moreover, 10% of proceeds go to breast cancer charities CoppaFeel! and Breast Cancer Now as part of Asda’s Tickled Pink campaign. Available at Asda stores nationwide, £3.50.

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‘My brave mum rai thousands to honou our son’s memory’

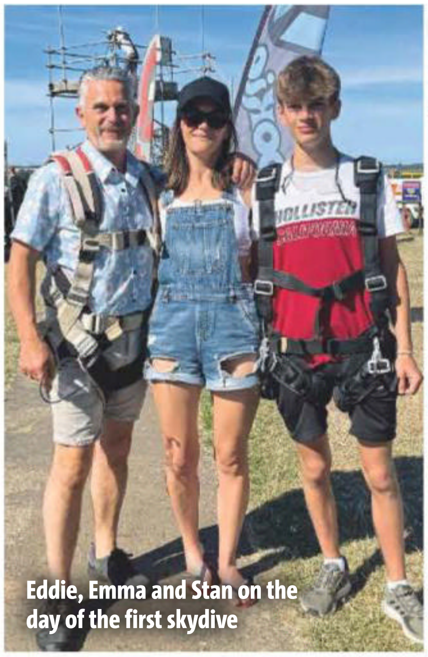
After her son’s devastating death, Emma Cleal, 46, was in awe of her mum’s daredevil pledge

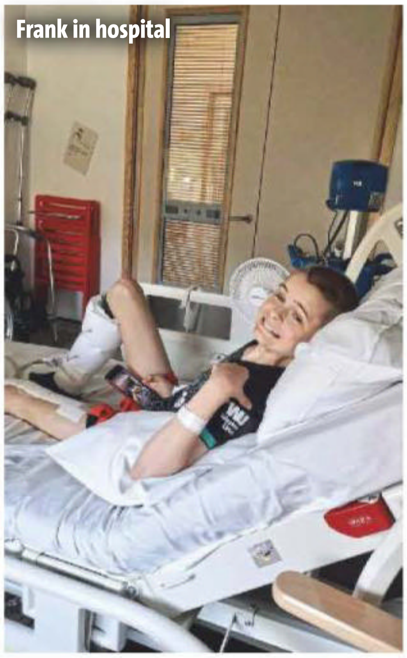
Smiling, I watched as my son Frank devoured his hot dog. He scooped up the onion from the sides and stuffed it into his mouth. As I bit into mine, he flashed me a cheeky grin and asked, ‘Is it vegan, Mum?’ It was a standing joke between us because I’d once been vegan, and now my mischievous 11-year-old boy never missed a chance to teasingly remind me.

A few days later, when I called him in for dinner, I noticed he was walking with a slight limp. He told me he’d fallen over during PE. But when he continued to limp, I took him to the GP even though he insisted he wasn’t in any pain. The GP suggested he’d suffered a hamstring strain that would get better with rest. My mum, Jacqui, and I began to keep a close eye on him. She lived close by and regularly popped in to help out and visit Frank and his brother, Stan, who was older by 13 months.

But during a holiday in Italy in April 2019, I became more worried because the limp had worsened. ‘He can’t keep up with his friends,’ I said anxiously to my husband, Eddie. Frank still wasn’t in any pain, but when I took him to another GP in June 2019, he found a lump on his thigh which didn’t move when it was touched. He had an X-ray and, on the way home, the GP called and asked us to come back in that same afternoon for the results. Eddie was working and, unperturbed, I said I was fine to go on my own with Frank. But the doctor called me in alone. ‘The scan indicates the lump is cancer,’ she said. My heart thumped in alarm, but I managed to swallow my distress and decided not to tell Frank anything until he had an MRI the following morning. But that night when both boys were in bed, I spoke to Eddie and my mum and the devastation on their faces mirrored mine.

Frank battled his illness so bravely


Eddie, Emma and Stan on the day of the first skydive


Frank in hospital

The next day, the MRI revealed Frank had osteosarcoma, a rare bone cancer. A tumour in his right femur measured 18cm. We were stunned, but wanting to be honest, we sat down later and explained everything to the boys. ‘I don’t understand,’ Frank said, shaking his head, bewildered. ‘I don’t even feel sick.’ Determination shone in his eyes as he began nine rounds of chemotherapy over 10 months. He was so brave and I couldn’t have been prouder.

‘Are they vegan, Mum?’

But during this treatment, doctors discovered the cancer had spread to his other knee. In December 2019, Frank had

sed
ur

Jacqui, aged 80, hurtled through the air

Frank, Jacqui and Stan had a close bond

surgery to remove the original tumour – metal was inserted in the affected bone – and five months later, surgery was carried out on the other leg. Not once did he ever moan, 'Why me?' 'You're doing so well,' my mum said, as she watched him slowly steering his walker on the hospital ward. He regained strength and started a new year at school, free of cancer. Relieved, I looked forward to our lives getting back to normal.

But just a few months later, we were devastated when small tumours appeared in his lungs. More surgery was carried out to remove them, but then a CT scan showed more tumours. Our hearts broke when we were told nothing more could be done. Telling Frank that treatment would no longer help was the worst day of my life. But once again, his courage shone through when he turned down drugs that could prolong his life. 'I don't want any more nights in hospital,' he said firmly. We concentrated on making amazing memories in the months he had left. He flew in a helicopter, drove a supercar, and set up a cinema in the back garden.

In June 2021, as his final days neared at our home in Hay-on-Wye, Powys, I made him as comfortable as possible and chatted normally to him. I talked about getting some Minstrels to eat. 'Are they vegan, Mum?' he joked. He was still so sharp and quick-witted, even when he was dying. Those were my boy's final words. He was just 13 and had battled so courageously for two years.

> 'I don't even feel sick'

At his funeral, we played *Perm* by Bruno Mars because it was one of Frank's favourite songs. We took his beloved dog, Bess, a black Labrador, to the service as well.

Afterwards, despite being enveloped in the fog of grief, I wanted to give financial help to other families whose children were being treated for cancer. Friends had helped us out by raising money for us and we now wanted to give back. In August 2021, we set up Be More Frank, a charity fundraising arm of the Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust, which had been founded in memory of four-year-old Grace Kelly, who tragically died of the cruel disease.

On Stan's 16th birthday in July 2022, he and Eddie did a skydive and raised £2000. A couple of years later, we were discussing more fundraising ideas with Mum and I suggested another skydive, remembering how successful the first one had been. 'I'm too scared to do it,' I said. 'I'll do it then,' Mum said. I stared at her in astonishment – she was almost 80! But she was determined. 'I want to do it for my birthday,' she said firmly. 'Frank fought so bravely. I want to honour that.' Her eyes shone with the same determination as Frank's had and I couldn't have felt prouder.

The GP checked her over and said she was fit enough to take to the skies. So we booked the jump, but then it was unfortunately postponed. Sadly, I couldn't watch her on the day it was rescheduled for in April 2024. Anxiously looking at the time she was due to leap out of the plane, I hurriedly picked up the phone when it rang. It was my dad, Bob, who briefly told me she'd done the jump and had landed safely. Later, they arrived at my house – Mum's face was beaming as I hugged her tight and she excitedly told me about making her way to the plane and getting strapped tightly to the instructor. She'd leapt from 13,000 feet, falling through the air until the parachute was pulled. 'It was so exhilarating,' she said, still smiling from ear to ear, describing how she'd felt the air buffeting against her. I was in awe of my octogenarian mum, who'd managed to raise £2300.

Overall, we've now raised £250,000 for families of children with cancer. It was the hardest two years of my life watching Frank fight – each day is still a battle. But we keep going and keep our heads up, doing our best to match the same bravery as Frank.

● *To find out more about the family's story and to make a donation, go to bemorefrank.org*

By Katie Pearson and Moira Holden

Dear Kate...

Counsellor Kate Medlin answers your personal, sexual and emotional problems

I've told her to leave her boyfriend

Q My daughter is 19 and has always been difficult. She would bunk off school, sneak out of the house when we grounded her, steal her phone back when we'd taken it away. She had an awful boyfriend when she was 16. He was controlling, stopped her seeing her friends, made her do drugs and had no respect for me or my husband. Luckily, they broke up after a year. For about a year she's been going out with a new guy. He's polite, kind and caring to our daughter, and has become part of the family. My husband has even taken him to football a couple of times! But, last week, we found out that she's lied to us about his age this whole time. She told us he was 21 (20 when they met) but it turns out he's 28! Although there is 10 years between me and my husband, we were older when we met so it's different. We had a massive row and she told me I was a joke and I told her to end the relationship or move out. I don't mean it, but don't know what to do.

A Children aren't born difficult. Something would have led to her acting this way. I'm not sure why she behaved like she did as a teenager, but her actions were her way of trying to tell you something that she couldn't express with words. The way you responded to her behaviour then became part of the pattern that you both became stuck in. She felt like she was labelled the 'bad' one, so she then behaved like she thought she was expected to. It will be hard for your daughter to change the pattern of the way you've learnt to behave with each other, so any change is going to have to come from you. It's understandable that you are

I think my husband should cover up!

Q We have a four-year-old daughter, and my husband walks around the house naked. He won't shut the door when he's having a bath or shower. I told him that I'm not comfortable with this and he pointed out the fact that I sometimes have a bath with our daughter. I told him it was different because we're both girls. He said there will come a time when she asks him to cover up, when she feels uncomfortable seeing him naked, and that he will follow her lead. But until then, he insists on staying uncovered. Am I wrong to feel that this is weird?

A We all have our own relationship with our bodies and with nakedness. There is no sexual element to your husband's nakedness, but wanting him to cover himself implies that you feel there is. When something is forbidden, it takes on a taboo status. Meaning that it is in some way wrong or bad. Perhaps the family you grew up in has left you believing that the naked body is shameful and therefore your daughter shouldn't be exposed to it. But witnessing you and your husband being comfortable with your own bodies will encourage her to have a more positive relationship with hers. And your husband is right. He can be led by your daughter. She'll certainly let him know when she wants him to shut the bathroom door!

I lose myself in an argument

Q My boyfriend and I have been together for three years and are mostly happy. But when we row, he will sulk, sometimes for days. He'll threaten to split up and I hardly recognise him. I will do anything to try and get my normal boyfriend back, including apologising for whatever he's annoyed about. But this means that he never has to consider my feelings. I can't bear the thought of losing him, but I know something needs to change.

A You seem to believe that your feelings are less important than his. But, of course, they aren't. Relationships can't grow if we don't have difficult conversations and can't give honest feedback to our partners about what we're really feeling. Because our partners can't read our minds, and it's the only way they can really get to know us. It isn't about blaming him, it's about revealing how his actions impact you. So no matter how hard it is, try to work on being more honest, and although it might feel difficult, all you're doing is letting him know you. Also, make a deal that neither of you use the threat to end the relationship as

Letters and replies may be edited for length/clarity. **Pictures:** Alamy, Shutterstock

Write to **Dear Kate**,
Bella, The Lantern,
75 Hampstead Road,
London, NW1 2PL, or email
bella.advice@bauermedia.co.uk.

Kate will attempt to respond to as many letters as possible through her page

concerned that a 28-year-old man is interested in your 18-year-old daughter. However, rather than telling her off, perhaps you could think about why she didn't feel able to share the truth with you. Our children need to be able to make their own mistakes, knowing that we will be the safe place they can always return to. So rather than chucking her out where she's likely to run into the arms of this man, change the record. Do something unexpected. Let her know that while you are worried about her, you trust her judgement and hope that she feels able to share any difficulties she may face in the future with you. At the moment, she feels judged and criticised by you. This may force her to withdraw further away. I don't think that's what either of you want. I know your reaction comes from a place of fear, but don't let that fear get in the way of the love you have for her.

---

a weapon in a row. It's not helpful, and is proving to be damaging because every time he says it, you believe him, and go into 'rescue mode' to do whatever it takes to save the relationship. And this is when your feelings get lost.

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Horoscopes

By Jane Struthers **For the week 21–28 Octobe**

SAGITTARIUS
23 November – 21 December

After several weeks of socialising with friends you're now more than ready to take a back seat for a while. On the 24th you benefit from a wide-ranging conversation that enables you to talk about something very dear to your heart.

Theme of the week: Privacy

☎ 0906 650 7238

CAPRICORN
22 December – 20 January

Push ahead with an ambition early in the week, and have faith that you can achieve it. This is the perfect time to believe in yourself. You're thinking along serious lines on the 25th yet without tipping over into pessimism.

Theme of the week: Friends

☎ 0906 650 7239

AQUARIUS
21 January – 19 February

Tread carefully on the 24th, when you feel so strongly about something that you could easily fall out with anyone who doesn't share your views. Alternatively, you might encounter someone with a power complex who you may wish to avoid.

Theme of the week: Self-control

☎ 0906 650 7240

PISCES
20 February – 20 March

Broaden your life by embracing new pursuits and ideas over the coming four weeks. Look at topics from a fresh angle, challenge yourself to learn something new or explore a philosophy or code of living that has always appealed to you.

Theme of the week: Optimism

☎ 0906 650 7241

ARIES
21 March – 20 April

If you've been struggling recently to keep things civil with a certain someone, it could pay to adopt a different approach. It will help to look deeper into the situation, so you can start to gain a better understanding of how to handle them.

Theme of the week: Analysis

☎ 0906 650 7230

TAURUS
21 April – 21 May 2025

Right now, your instincts are telling you to create harmony with the people around you, yet this is so much easier said than done on the 24th when clashes with a close associate leave you feeling manipulated. Above all else, resist the temptation to retaliate!

Theme of the week: Count to ten

☎ 0906 650 7231

GEMINI
22 May – 21 June

Now is a wonderful opportunity to begin a new venture, possibly with romantic or emotional overtones. On the 24th and 25th you take a practical attitude to anything connected with work, particularly if you want to show that you know what you're doing.

Theme of the week: Details

☎ 0906 650 7232

Kim Kardashian – 45 on 21 October

SCORPIO
24 October – 22 November

Are you thinking of starting a new venture, even though you're not sure how it will work out? Well, this is a fabulous week for setting the wheels in motion. A surge in confidence is a great help on the 24th.

Theme of the week: Get set

☎ 0906 650 7237

CANCER
22 June – 23 July

You've been focusing on your home and family recently, and if that has led to fresh ideas or plans the time has now come to begin putting them into action. From midweek onwards you start to become caught up in light-hearted projects and amusements.

Theme of the week: Being yourself

☎ 0906 650 7233

LEO
24 July – 23 August

Gather your loved ones around you this week. On the whole you'll be happiest whenever you're with your nearest and dearest, although this could be an uncomfortable experience on the 24th thanks to someone's domineering, or even bullying, behaviour.

Theme of the week: Old habits

☎ 0906 650 7234

VIRGO
24 August – 23 September

Don't underestimate the power of your words right now! If you're a typical Virgo you're always keen to ensure that you say what you mean. The 24th is the perfect opportunity to give someone some much-needed encouragement.

Theme of the week: Keeping on the move

☎ 0906 650 7235

LIBRA
24 September – 23 October

Remind yourself of where your priorities really lie at the moment. You may have to spend time on tasks that don't mean much, but try to balance those with activities that set your pulse racing or carry deep meaning for you, especially on the 24th and 25th.

Theme of the week: What matters most

☎ 0906 650 7236

For a more detailed weekly forecast call the number for your star sign. Calls cost 65p per minute plus your network access charge. Weekly forecasts last approximately four minutes. Messages are pre-recorded. For entertainment and guidance purposes only. Users must be over 18. Service provider: Spoke. Customer service number 0333 202 3390 (9am-5pm)

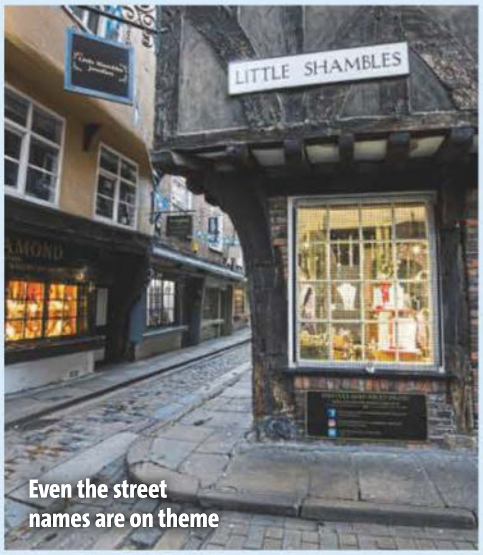
Spooky walks

This Halloween season, explore some of Britain's eeriest corners

Dunnottar Castle, Aberdeen

Perched dramatically on a cliff overlooking the North Sea, Dunnottar Castle, just outside Aberdeen, is a hauntingly beautiful ruin steeped in history and legend. Said to be possessed by the ghost of a Green Lady searching for her lost children, the castle's weathered stone walls and windswept setting make it the perfect backdrop for a spooky walk. The approach along the coastal path is breathtaking, with crashing waves below. Whether you believe in the spiritual realm or simply enjoy atmospheric history, Dunnottar offers an unforgettable blend of natural beauty and spine-tingling mystery.

- **Stay nearby at Rooms at 31 in Stonehaven. Accommodation from £93 per night at expedia.com**



Even the street names are on theme

Snickelways, York

Like a scene straight out of Harry Potter, the Snickelways of York are a network of narrow, twisting passages connecting streets and courtyards across the historic Yorkshire city. Many date back to medieval times, with names like Mad Alice Lane and Whip-Ma-Whop-Ma-Gate. Worn cobblestones, leaning timber-framed houses, and sudden turns help to create a creepy atmosphere. At night, dim street lamps and deep shadows transform these lanes into the perfect setting for a mystical walk. Tales of ghosts, highwaymen, and ancient crimes linger in the air, making every step feel like part of a Halloween story.

- **Stay at Wheatlands Lodge with rooms costing from £88 per night at booking.com**

Twisting passages give a mystical feel

Striking views over the North Sea

Stop by the Devil's Cauldron

Lydford Gorge, Devon

Known as the deepest gorge in the southwest, and one of the National Trust's most dramatic sites, Lydford Gorge in Devon is a sight to behold. Its winding paths lead through damp, mossy woodland where shadows gather beneath rocky overhangs. The highlight is the White Lady Waterfall, a 30-metre cascade that seems almost ghostly in misty weather. Further along, don't miss the Devil's Cauldron – a whirlpool hidden in a dark chasm. Steep, slippery trails add to the thrill, making every turn feel a little unpredictable. Perfect for an atmospheric autumn walk.

● **Stay within walking distance of the gorge at The Castle Inn. Rooms cost from £100 per night at castleinnlydford.co.uk**

The Lanes, Brighton

With their narrow alleyways and centuries-old buildings, The Lanes are the perfect setting for a Brighton stroll. By day, they're bustling with quirky shops and cafés, but by night, shadows creep along the cobbled streets, and whispers of eerie history linger in the air. Taking a tour here reveals tales of smuggling, ghostly sightings, and mysterious disappearances that give The Lanes their haunting charm.

● **Stay at The Old Ship Hotel, which has a haunting history and offers regular guided ghost walks of The Lanes. Rooms from £76.50 at oldshipbrighton.co.uk**

Get lost in The Lanes

BRIGHTON LANES ANTIQUES
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One of the UK's oldest pubs

THE SKIRRID INN

Skirrid Inn, Abergavenny

The Skirrid Inn near Abergavenny is known as one of Britain's most haunted pubs, with over 900 years of history steeped in spine-tingling tales. Once used as a courtroom where criminals were sentenced to hang, it's said that some spirits never left. Visitors report cold spots, ghostly footsteps, and the sensation of being watched. Its stone walls, low beams, and candlelit corners create an atmosphere perfect for sinister storytelling. Surrounded by the misty beauty of the Brecon Beacons, it's an ideal starting point for a bracing hike through the Welsh countryside.

● **Stay in one of the guest rooms at the Skirrid Inn from £90 per night. Book at skirridinn.com**

By Lucy Brown. **Pictures** Alamy, Getty, Shutterstock

Mary At 90: A Lifetime of Cooking

Tuesday 28 October, BBC2

Dame Mary Berry is taking us on a heartwarming journey through her incredible career, sharing favourite recipes and memories from her early days in the '60s right up to today. With the help of some famous friends, Mary will revisit her most iconic dishes, update the classics and share brand-new recipes, as you're never too old to learn! 'It was incredibly special to film,' says Mary. 'We have clips from the archives from when I started my career and some that I've not seen for decades – it was wonderful to see them and see how differently we cook now but also how some things have stayed the same.'

DAISY MAY AND CHARLIE COOPER'S NIGHTWATCH

Sunday 26 October, BBC2

Daisy May Cooper and her brother Charlie are teaming up for spooky adventures, spending the night in some of the UK's most haunted buildings. Their lifelong fascination with the paranormal, thanks to scary movies as kids, is tested in a series of eerie locations. Their nerves and sibling bond are also under strain! 'Ever since we were kids, we've really been into the paranormal or supernatural,' says Daisy. '[There have been] quite a few different times where I've come across the unexplained or had actual encounters with ghosts.' The first sleepless night is in the old Gloucester prison, where they're locked in a tiny cell.

Return To Paradise

Friday 31 October, BBC1

Detective Sergeant Mackenzie Clarke (Anna Samson) is back in her hometown of Dolphin Cove, solving more tricky cases while dealing with the bombshell that her ex-fiancé, Glenn (Tai Hara), still has feelings for her. As Colin plans Glenn's stag do, things get awkward for Mackenzie, especially since she and Glenn are teaming up on a new case. The series welcomes back familiar faces and features exciting Aussie guest stars, plus some wild new mysteries – including a notorious rock band who fall under suspicion when one of their members turns up dead and the puzzling poisoning of a man alone at sea.

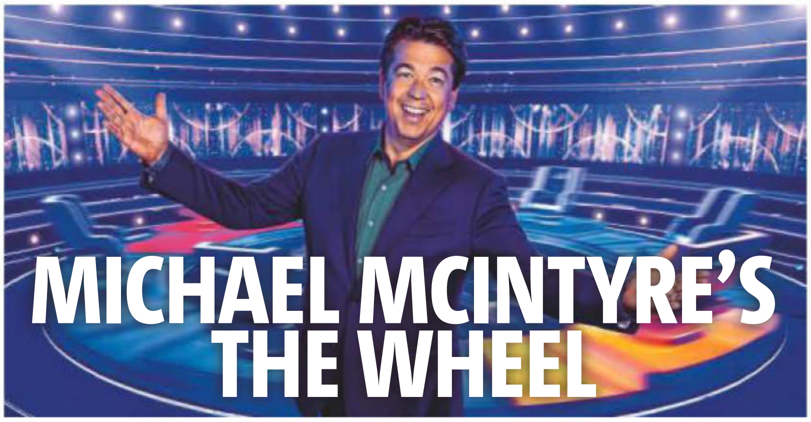
By Caroline Blight, Amber Connolly, Amy Rowland

TV timings are subject to change

NEW THIS WEEK

Art Detectives

Thursday 30 October, U&Drama
Get ready for a fresh twist on crime drama with this new series set in the Heritage Crime Unit, where art-loving DI Mick Palmer (Stephen Moyer) and no-nonsense DC Shazia Malik (Nina Singh) tackle murders tied to the high-stakes world of art and antiques. From priceless Old Masters and Banksy's street art to Viking gold and Titanic relics, each episode sees the duo unravel mysteries fuelled by greed and revenge. While solving these captivating cases, Mick also juggles a romance with museum curator Rosa (Sarah Alexander) and the unexpected arrival of his infamous forger father, Ron (Larry Lamb).



MICHAEL MCINTYRE'S THE WHEEL

Saturday 25 October, BBC1
Michael McIntyre is back spinning the wheel as three contestants hope to answer their way to a fortune, helped by the seven celebrities around them. 'When it launched in lockdown with social distancing, I had no idea it would evolve – and revolve – into such a staple of TV entertainment,' reflects Michael. 'It's fast become my happy place and I can't see myself not making more and more series as it's genuinely so much fun to play – I think that is always the secret of good entertainment. If we're having fun then it'll be fun to watch.'

THE GOOD LIFE: INSIDE OUT

Tuesday 28 October, U&Gold
This nostalgic special takes fans behind the scenes of one of British television's best-loved sitcoms. Dame Penelope Keith, who played Margo Leadbetter, guides us and returns to a recreated set for a delightful trip down memory lane, revisiting locations with never-before-seen glimpses of original production notes. 'I have such happy memories – it was a wonderful cast and we were working with excellent scripts and a first rate production team,' says Penelope. 'The only thing I can't really believe is that it's 50 years since I first played Margo... where have the years gone?'

FILM

Springsteen: Deliver Me From Nowhere

While a young Bruce Springsteen is on the brink of worldwide fame, he struggles to grapple with the pressures of success alongside the ghosts of his past. Detailing Springsteen's journey to creating the famous 1982 album *Nebraska*, which emerged as he recorded *Born In The USA* with the E Street Band, the film focuses on this pivotal point in the legend's history. *The Bear*'s Jeremy Allen White takes on the role of The Boss in this much-anticipated musical biopic.

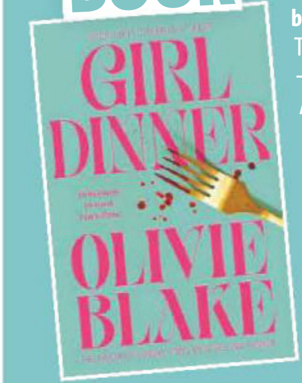
PODCAST

Table Manners

The popular podcast has returned once again for its 18th series! In it, singer Jessie Ware and her chef extraordinaire mum Lennie sit down with a celebrity guest for a bite to eat and a bit of natter, discussing food, family and everything in between. The first guests this season include Reese Witherspoon and Gary Oldman, with many more big names to come.

Table Manners
with Jessie & Lennie Ware

BOOK



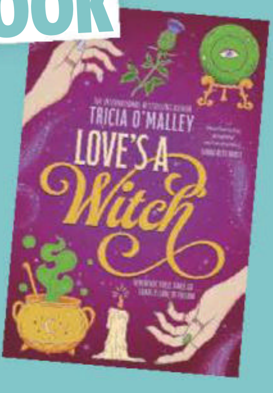
Girl Dinner

by Olivia Blake (Mantle)
The House is the most exclusive sorority on campus – its alumni are beautiful, successful and admired. After a disastrous freshman year, Nina Kaur believes joining The House will secure her future and keep her safe. Adjunct professor Sloane Hartley, returning to work after maternity leave, feels trapped in malaise until she's invited to serve as The House's academic liaison. As Nina and Sloane are drawn into the sorority's seductive rituals, they discover that perfection demands sacrifice,and must decide what they'll pay for belonging and power. Gripping.

BOOK

Love's A Witch

by Tricia O'Malley (Simon&Schuster)
Sloane MacGregor swore never to return to Briarhaven, but for her 25th birthday – the day witches gain their power – her grandmother summons her and her sisters home to break their family's ancient curse. Knox Douglas, Briarhaven's grumpy mayor and Sloane's former crush, has worked hard to make the town safe for magic, and the last thing he needs is a cursed MacGregor causing disorder. As chaos brews and sparks fly, they'll learn that in Briarhaven, love might be the most powerful spell of all. A magical, fun read.



‘I think a bang

EXPLOSIVES OFFICER
EXPLOSIVES OFFICER

Explosives, revenge and a race against time – our Sunday nights are about to get a lot more explosive as *Trigger Point* returns for a sizzling third series! This time, Lana Washington (Vicky McClure) and her device disposal team are called to investigate a chilling bomb threat, only to uncover a terrifying vendetta, as victims are targeted in a relentless campaign of revenge. With old faces meeting new, including Jason Flemyng as mysterious newcomer Steven Wyles, and after the major shocks from last series, only the bravest will survive. Here, Vicky, 42, gives *Bella* the lowdown on wearing those iconic bomb suits and bringing Lana back to life…

What can viewers look forward to from *Trigger Point* series 3?
Your Sunday nights are about to be filled with utter Triggerverse gold, honestly! This series is brilliant. We've brought in some incredible new actors, like Jason Flemyng, and the team is back, more connected than ever. The explosive moments really are coming thick and fast, and you'll even see me running a lot! I know people are going to watch and just go, ‘Wow.’ Even from the trailer, I'm just so proud of what everyone's achieved. People have worked so hard, I have to shout about it as I think we've made a banging show. Enjoy!

You're back for Series 3 as both exec and star, as well as such a huge vote of confidence from fans – how did those first meetings feel?
Honestly, it was just really exciting. We know now *Trigger Point* can go as far as we want it to, and with Chris Brandon leading the writing team and this amazing cast and crew, the possibilities felt endless. We just threw ourselves in and decided to make it more characterful, more suspenseful, even bigger and better! Everyone was totally up for it and really brought a fresh energy. We started strong and finished strong. It's been nothing but a joy.

Is it easy to reconnect with Lana as a character, especially when you slip back into bomb disposal mode?
Absolutely, and I've got the snips right here at home! As soon as I

we've made ging series!'

She says it's the attention to detail that helps her get in character

Vicky McClure is back in action as explosives expert Lana Washington for a nerve-shredding new run of *Trigger Point*

Vicky in action

get them in my hand, I feel like Lana again. No doubt about it.

The bomb suit has become iconic with fans, do you look forward to those scenes?

I do, just like the audience does. When the suit's on, I know it's going to be a big moment! This season, we've got a new, slightly lighter version of the suit, although it's still bloody heavy! It's odd that I now know way too much about different bomb suits. We always want things to look real and fresh. And this time, Lana isn't the only one suited up, which was fun.

You don't seem to take the easy route, there's a lot of physical work involved in your scenes – how do you handle that?

It drives me mad when you see fake props on TV, like empty tea cups or bags without weight, so I always make sure Lana's gear is heavy and real. My bag is always loaded with everything she'd need, and it really puts you in the right mindset. At one point, I insisted on lifting a real breeze block rather than a foam one. Okay, I regretted it after about five takes! But honestly, nine months on *Trigger Point* and I feel fitter than ever, and that's not usually me. We're running everywhere because Chris loves to write scenes with Lana legging it!

The rest of the crew on set

How do you prepare for portraying Lana's PTSD and tinnitus?

PTSD means something different to everyone who deals with it, so I always lean on our advisor Joel as he's an actual explosives officer and really helps keep it real. Having him on set is absolutely vital. He knows what Lana's gone through and how PTSD would affect her. With the tinnitus arc, my own dad has that from working with power tools, so I know how tough and distracting it is, especially in high-pressure moments like Lana faces.

Do you feel at home in the bomb suit?

The suit really helps me get into character, though filming during a heatwave while everyone around me gets a tan was a bit of a nightmare! But I love Lana; she's full of energy and attitude, which I try to bring out. She's a real hero, and it's beautiful for me to play that. Every day on *Trigger Point* is high-octane; there's no taking it easy. It keeps you on your toes.

And how comfortable are you with the actual explosives kit these days?

Oh, I couldn't defuse a real bomb, but I definitely feel more natural handling the equipment now. I always joke I'm like Buckaroo, with all this stuff strapped on: helmet, boots, torch, knee pads, gadgets in every pocket. I never want Lana to look like she doesn't know what she's doing, and I think that realness always comes across.

● *Trigger Point, Sunday 26 October, ITV1*

By Cecile Metcalf, **Pictures** ITV

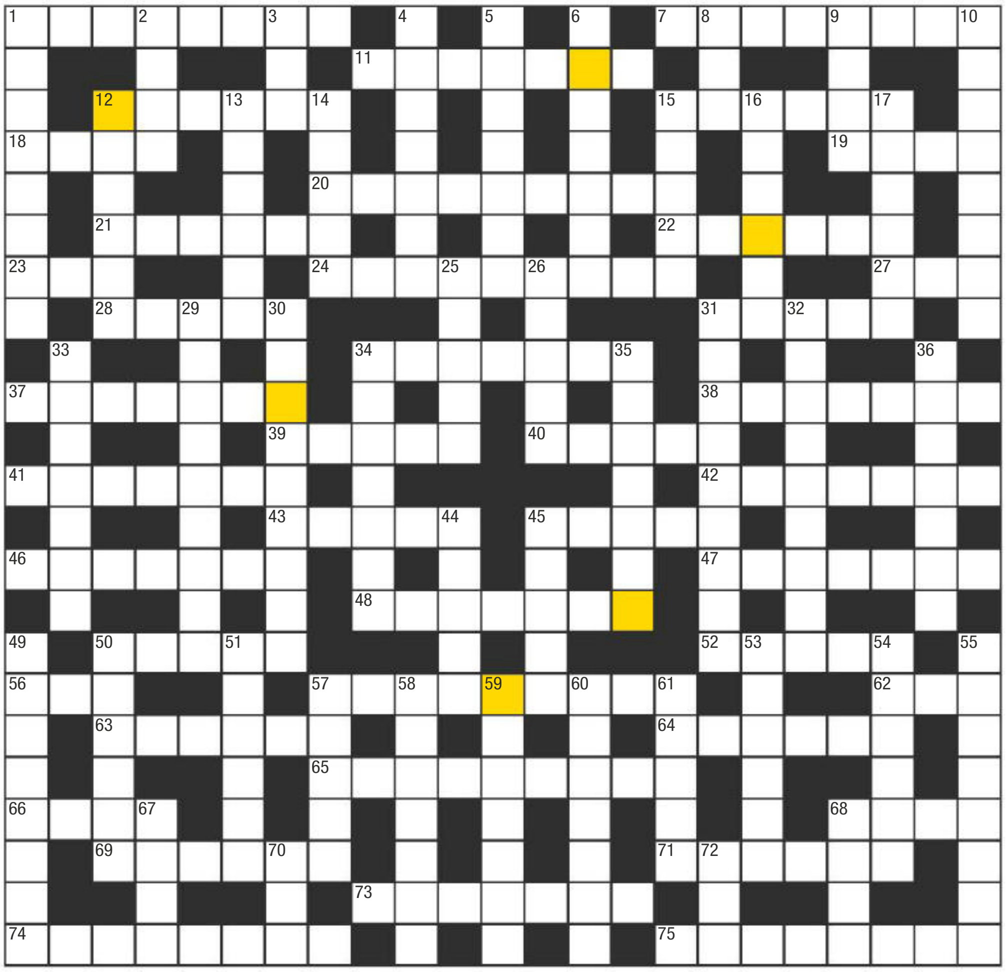
Puzzles

YOU could be in with a chance of winning £200

PRIZE crossword

WIN £200

Solve the crossword to find, reading from top to bottom in the shaded squares, the name of a US rapper. This is your competition entry answer. See the 'How to enter' panel, below right.



Across

1 Begin, start off (8)
7 World's second largest ocean (8)
11 German - - -, rubella (7)
12 Jumble, mess (6)
15 Petrol station (6)
18 - - - Merton, team captain on *Have I Got News For You* (4)
19 Oscar-winning actress, - - - Hathaway (4)
20 Formal employee assessment (9)
21 Cube of bacon (6)
22 Magical potion (6)
23 Diamonds? (3)

31 Across

24 Heart drug obtained from foxgloves (9)
27 State on the west coast of India (3)
28 Drying cloth (5)
31 Karren - - -, business executive who is an advisor to Alan Sugar on *The Apprentice*, pictured above (5)
34 Wine cup used in the Eucharist (7)
37 Old sailing ship (7)
38 Not carrying weapons (7)
39 Brooklyn neighbourhood famed for its amusement parks, - - - Island (5)
40 Sound (5)
41 Catholic clerical cap, anagram of BATTIER (7)
42 Meat seller (7)
43 *Countdown's* long-serving resident lexicographer, - - - Dent (5)
45 *Tired Of Being* - - -, Al Green song that was covered by Texas (5)
46 Flood, deluge (7)
47 Layered pasta dish (7)
48 Greed (7)
50 Marge Simpson's hubby (5)
52 Flower stem (5)
56 Sense of self (3)
57 Member of a secretive society who meet in lodges and have special handshakes (9)
62 Unit of work (3)
63 Capital of the Czech Republic (6)
64 Gaseous element with the symbol O (6)
65 Renowned British seafood chef (4,5)
66 Retain part of the castle? (4)
68 Fairy in Persian myth (4)
69 Cure (6)
71 Excite (6)
73 Honest and frank, anagram of FUN PORT (7)
74 Alfred, Lord - - -, Poet Laureate (8)
75 Move (a footballer) from one club to another (8)

Down

1 Moan and groan (8)
2 Handle roughly (4)
3 Mountain pass (3)
4 Item of camping equipment used to secure a guy rope (4,3)
5 Road-surfacing material (7)
6 Spray can (7)
8 Cup o' Rosie (3)
9 - - - Munchetty, *BBC Breakfast* anchor, pictured right (4)
10 Comedy film starring Helen Mirren, - - - *Girls* (8)
12 Food fish (6)
13 Absent-minded drawing (6)
14 Spiral-horned antelope (5)
15 - - - Brandreth, novelty jumper-wearing broadcaster (5)
16 Thrusting sword (6)
17 Vigour, vim (6)
25 Rome's country (5)
26 Ridley Scott horror sci-fi movie with Sigourney Weaver (5)
29 Vitamin-rich cereal extract, anagram of MERGE WHAT (5,4)
30 Hollywood actor, Burt - - - (9)
31 Woodland flowers abundant in spring (9)
32 Disney film about an orphaned Russian duchess (9)
33 US caretaker? (7)
34 Card game (7)
35 One programme in a series (7)
36 Degrades, cheapens (7)
44 Rub out (5)
45 Meera Syal novel, - - - *And Me* (5)
49 Nautical rope bond (4,4)
50 Space - - -, bouncy '80s toy (6)
51 *Schitt's Creek* star, - - - Levy (6)
53 - - - Swift, music superstar (6)
54 Dog house (6)
55 Sand-filled kitchen device (3,5)
57 Passenger boat (5)
58 Snippet (7)
59 Eyelash cosmetic (7)
60 Former S Club 7 singer, Rachel - - - (7)
61 Group of nine (5)
67 *Milk* actor, Sean - - - (4)
68 Additionally (4)
70 Double act (3)
72 That woman (3)

9 Down

COMPETITION AND GIVEAWAY RULES Competitions open to residents of the UK (including Channel Islands and the Isle of Man), Eire or BFPOs, aged 18 or over, except Bauer Media employees, its affiliated companies, any promotional partners, or their families and anyone connected with the competitions. Enter by text, online or phone. No purchase necessary. Answers must be the product of own work. Unless expressly stated, travel expenses and spending money is not included. There is no cash alternative to prizes and no alternative holidays can be offered. Prizes are not transferable. No responsibility can be accepted for entries that are delayed, damaged, mislaid or wrongly delivered, or for any loss in service of the online entry mechanism or for entries lost, delayed or corrupted due to computer error in transit. Only one entry per person. A winning entry is the first correct answer drawn after the closing date. For a free entry, enter online at bellamagazine.co.uk. Prizewinners will be notified by post on headed paper or by official email. The results are published. Winners must agree to the publication of their names, age and photos. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into. Your information will only be used to administer promotions in accordance with our privacy policy. Entry implies acceptance of these rules. Promoter: H Bauer Publishing. Full T&Cs can be found at bauerlegal.co.uk/competition-terms.html

Crossword Neil Locker. **Pictures** Shutterstock

Sudoku

Fill in the blank squares with the numbers 1 to 9 so that each row, each column and each smaller 3x3 block contains all the numbers from 1 to 9.

EASY

2	6		8		1			3
3	1		5					
			6			5		
	8	2	3					
4								1
					8	9	5	
		6			7			
					5		8	6
9			1		3		7	4

HARD

	1		3				2	
3		4						6
				1	6		4	
		8		5				3
		3	9		4	8		
9				8		4		
	2		8	9				
5						6		8
	8				5		7	

***Take A Break Sudoku* magazine, containing over 80 fun-to-solve puzzles, is on sale now.**

PRIZE Arrowword

WIN £200

Solve the clues, writing your answers in the directions shown by the arrows, to reveal, reading down the shaded squares, the name of the comedy act Jemaine Clement formed with Taika Waititi at university. This is your competition entry answer. See the 'How to enter' panel below.

Pop star, Pixie ---	▼	London's main river	'Hello' in Spanish	▼	*The Night Watch* painter	Sudden forward thrust	▼	Music producer, Mark ---	▼	Mean (to)	Stifle – with love?	Relating to hearing	▼	Festive film with Will Ferrell
Shakespeare tragedy	▶	▼	🟨▼			▼		Of the nose	▶		▼	▼		Jumping parasite
Radiohead front man, --- Yorke	▶				Kitchen cupboard	🟨▶				Furry hand-warmer	🟨▶			▼
▶								Archbishop of York	▶				Radio code for 'K'	
Hertfordshire city (2,6)	Spoil, ruin	▶			Stupid henchman	▶	🟨			--- That, Gary and the guys	▶		▼	
--- Sarandon, US actress	Perfect world		Prayer ending?	▶				Summer flower	▶					
▶	🟨▼				 Jemaine Clement					Archer's missile		Underground plant part		Cry
Uncertainty		Greatest possible	Wild pig							▶		🟨▼		▼
▶		▼	🟨▼							African country, Sierra ---	*TOWIE*'s county		Lost clownfish?	
Continued overleaf… (1,1,1)	▶			Confused situation (3-2)						▶	🟨▼		▼	
Mosque's prayer leader	▶			▼						Single pace	▶			
▶										*Breaking Bad* actor, --- Paul		Theatre tickets?		Iron (clothes)
Indigenous New Zealander	Computer geek?		Ancient Germanic letter		Join-the- ---, kids' puzzle	▼	Thick	Indian dress	Greek fable writer	🟨▼▶		▼		▼
▶	▼		▼		▼			🟨▼	Wood chopper	▶			Deep sleep state (1,1,1)	
Uninvited visitors		On top of	▶				Ventilate	▶			*Just The Way You* ---, song	▶	▼	
▶				Old Russian ruler	🟨▶				Music duo, Hall & ---	▶				
Smile broadly		Alleviate	▶				Charged particle	▶			Text message? (1,1,1)	▶		🟨

SOLUTIONS

Sudoku solutions can be found online now at bellamagazine.co.uk

ISSUE 40

PRIZE ANSWERS

Crossword
Bruno Mars

Arrowword
Big Night

Lantern Festival stay
a) Chinese New Year

Full solutions to this week's prize puzzles can be found at bellamagazine.co.uk after the closing date: **3 November 2025**

HOW TO ENTER THE PRIZE COMPETITIONS

BY PHONE: 0901 130 0237

When asked for the issue number, key in 42. Calls cost 50p per call, plus your network access charge. (UK readers only.) You must be 18 or over and have the bill payer's permission.

BY TEXT: 65115

Text BEL42 then a space followed by your name, house number or name, your postcode, then your answer(s), all separated by a space, to 65115, eg Jane Smith 10 SL5 9JN Answer(s). Texts cost 50p plus your standard network rate. Keep texts under 160 characters or you may be charged for more than one text.

- If you enter after the closing date, you will not be entered but may be charged. Not available in Eire. Please ensure your entry is completed correctly, as incorrect entries may be charged but not entered. This is not a subscription service.

- **You are automatically consenting to receive further communications about these competitions from us via SMS text. You can opt out of this at any time by texting STOP to 65115.** This will be charged at your standard network rate, but you will need to do this each time you enter the competition by text. Your personal data will (regardless of whether you opt out) always be used to process your entry. For further information, see general terms and privacy policy at Bauerdatapromise.co.uk.

- Lines close at 11.59pm on **3 November 2025**.

Phone UK SP: Spoke (0333 202 3390). Text SP: Bauer Media. Email smshelp@bauermedia.co.uk or call 0330 159 2525.

OR ENTER ONLINE:
Bellamagazine.co.uk

Bella
Welcome to Bella Magazine
WIN
£25
Perfect Gifts

Continued over the page…

Puzzles contin

BITS & PIECES

We've taken a completed crossword puzzle and cut it up to give 24 pieces. Your task is to rebuild the puzzle with the help of the piece that we've already placed in the grid.

S	E	A									
I	■	■									
G	A	W									

A	■	F
T	■	U
E	N	L

T	A	S
I	■	E
L	■	P

A	N	G
■	■	H
I	S	T

E	Z	E
P	■	U
T	E	D

I	R	E
■	A	■
■	T	I

C	A	R
U	■	I
T	A	C

A	D	M
I	■	E
R	■	T

G	O	■
■	R	U
K	Y	■

D	■	A
E	■	K
R	I	E

~~S~~	~~E~~	~~A~~
~~I~~	■	■
~~G~~	~~A~~	~~W~~

S	N	E
E	■	■
G	I	F

■	V	A
D	E	■
■	G	O

■	A	■
E	B	L
■	O	■

■	R	■
J	A	R
■	■	I

R	■	E
E	■	A
G	E	R

R	E	V
U	■	E
B	A	R

■	R	■
N	I	M
■	A	■

L	E	T
A	■	W
R	G	E

H	■	■
T	A	X
■	G	■

R	C	H
E	■	O
P	■	R

■	■	D
A	L	■
D	■	F

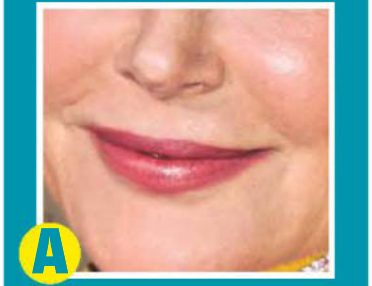
E	A	L
■	■	A
E	L	Y

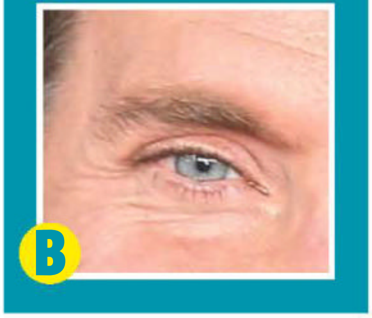
Y	■	G
■	F	E
H	■	■

T	E	■
■	T	■
R	A	I

GUESS THE CELEB

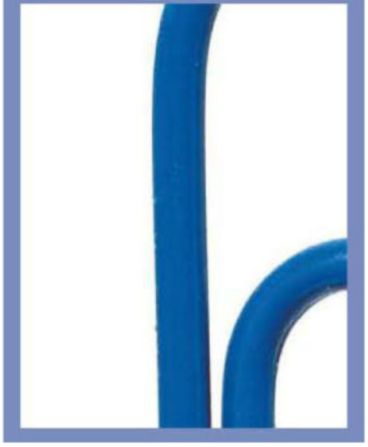
Can you name these stars by seeing close ups of their famous faces?


A


B

WHAT ON EARTH?

Can you guess what everyday object this super zoomed in photo shows?



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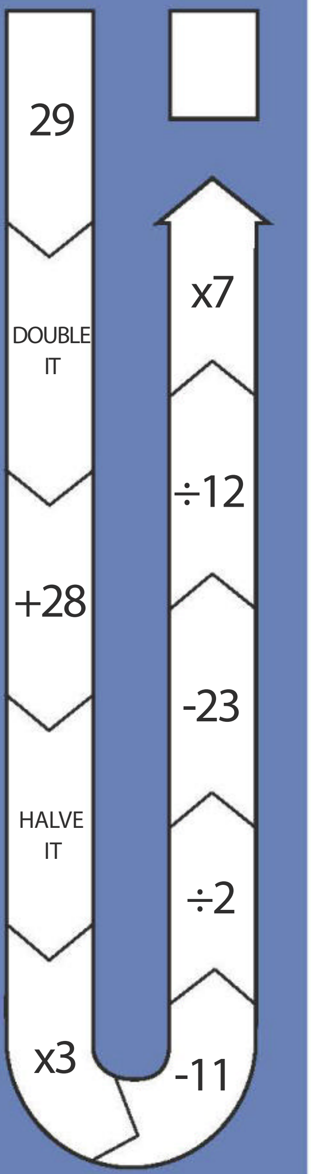
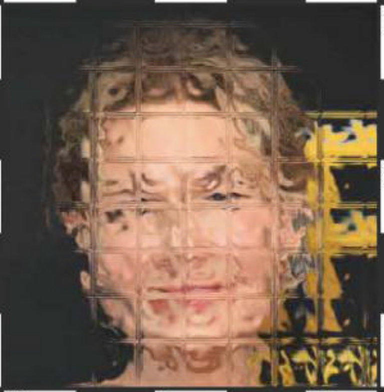
ROUND SUM

Work out the solution to the sum by following the instructions contained within the arrow.



CELEBRITY CODEBREAKER

When you've solved this puzzle, use the code to transfer the letters to the numbered boxes in the lower grid and reveal the identity of our mystery celebrity.



■	4	■	13	■	26	7	1	■	17	■	11	■	10	■
8	11	12	16	23	22	■	26	24	19	11	25	25	9	18
■	2	■	20	■	11	■	2	■	9	■	24	■	23	■
26 A	13 F	3 T	■	16	23	12	26	18	9	18	■	10	16	21
■	14	■	16	■	2	■	1	■	15	■	23	■	3	■
7	15	14	8	21						6	26	6	19	9
5	■	■	21	■						■	22	■	■	20
14	23	18	9	25						26	22	16	15	9
26	■	■	25	■						■	16	■	■	25
18	9	12	16	15						1	23	9	15	3
■	5	■	15	■	19	■	7	■	18	■	22	■	11	■
4	14	22	■	18	9	7	3	25	11	2	■	26	17	9
■	16	■	26	■	15	■	14	■	14	■	13	■	9	■
7	3	26	25	3	15	9	18	■	24	25	14	16	7	9
■	2	■	3	■	11	■	2	9	3	■	23	■	3	■

~~A~~BCDE~~F~~GHIJ
KLMNOPQRS
~~T~~UVWXYZ

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
		T										F
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
												A

25	9	23	9	9	■	10	9	15	15	17	9	22	9	25
					■									

Pictures Shutterstock

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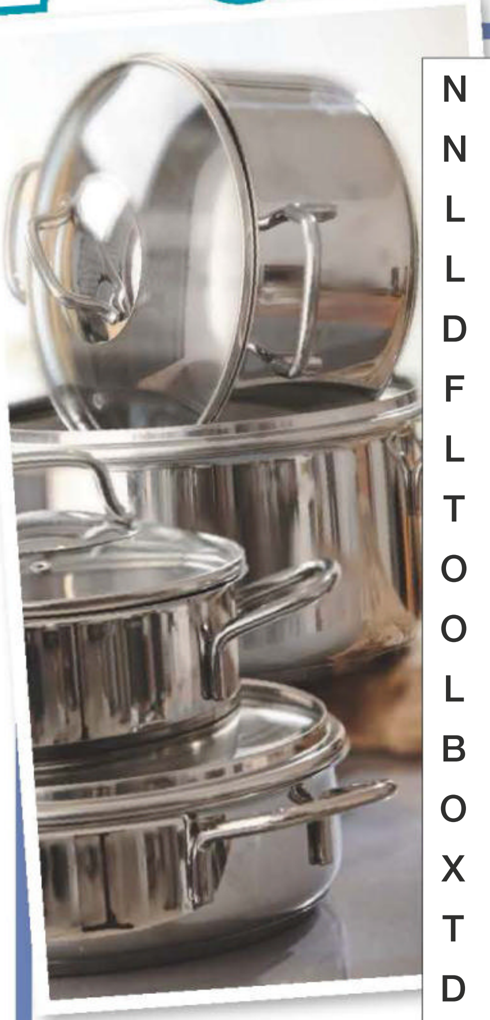
Puzzles contin



HOLD IT!

See if you can get to grips with this search all about things that have handles.

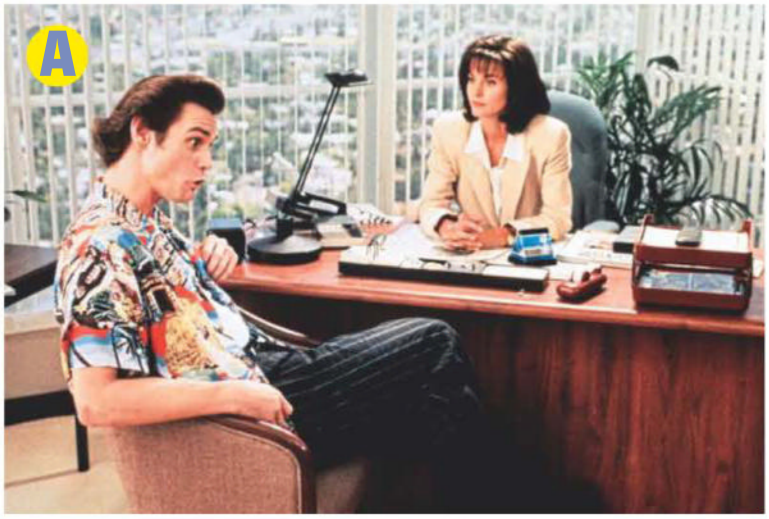
N	A	P	G	N	I	Y	R	F	S	G	W	X	E	R	M	P	U	T	E
N	L	E	V	O	H	S	Q	A	S	H	A	I	R	D	R	Y	E	R	L
L	L	A	D	L	O	H	U	T	E	K	C	A	R	S	I	N	N	E	T
L	E	C	B	W	R	C	W	E	R	P	Y	W	O	D	N	I	W	N	L
D	R	J	I	C	E	H	L	A	T	V	S	Z	E	T	U	O	A	E	O
F	B	A	E	P	R	B	F	S	T	S	W	G	T	P	R	L	O	M	D
L	M	R	A	I	A	C	R	T	A	E	O	A	A	T	G	D	A	T	O
T	U	N	I	R	H	A	E	R	M	K	R	B	R	B	T	Y	E	N	I
O	A	N	R	S	L	U	E	A	R	F	C	I	O	D	D	N	E	R	E
O	A	O	C	D	C	G	Z	I	E	A	M	T	N	I	R	N	P	S	A
L	W	N	B	H	R	A	E	N	E	O	L	I	U	G	A	O	A	C	I
B	S	N	L	Y	B	T	R	E	V	D	E	N	T	H	C	C	B	H	A
O	K	N	I	S	V	O	C	R	E	R	W	O	C	L	E	A	V	E	R
X	T	U	C	S	L	A	X	E	I	B	A	R	P	H	G	Y	N	N	D
T	E	K	C	U	B	S	R	A	T	E	S	A	C	F	E	I	R	B	I
D	R	O	M	I	I	H	F	G	S	D	R	A	O	B	P	U	C	N	C
R	E	D	N	A	L	O	C	D	U	S	T	B	I	N	I	L	T	E	I
O	Y	E	L	L	O	R	T	A	D	T	R	I	A	H	C	H	S	U	P
W	T	A	N	K	A	R	D	O	A	P	F	L	I	G	H	T	B	A	G
S	R	O	S	S	I	C	S	L	R	M	U	T	A	R	I	G	S	E	N

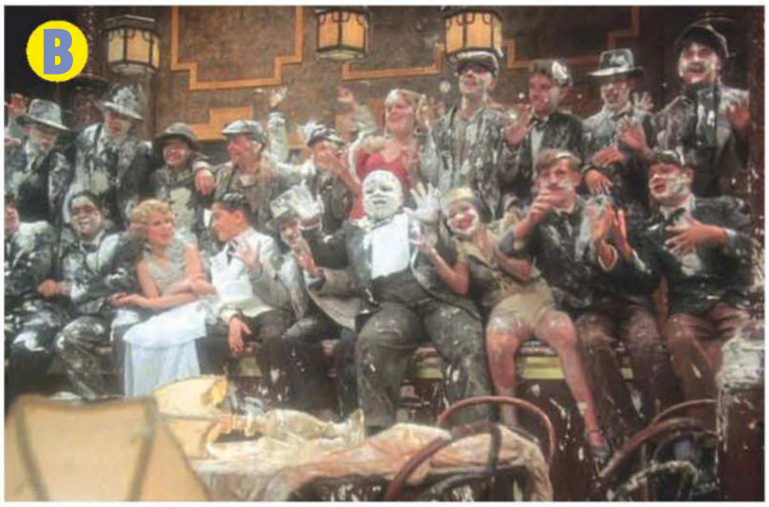
ATTACHE CASE
BRIEFCASE
BUCKET
CABINET
CARRIER BAG
CLEAVER
COLANDER
CUPBOARD
DUSTBIN
FLIGHT BAG
FREEZER
FRYING PAN
GRAVY BOAT
HAIRDRYER
HANDBAG
HOLDALL
LUNCH BOX
MATTRESS
PUSHCHAIR
SAUCEPAN
SCISSORS
SHOVEL
SPEAR
SWORD
TANKARD
TEA STRAINER
TENNIS RACKET
TOOLBOX
TROLLEY
TROWEL
UMBRELLA
WARDROBE
WATERING CAN
WHEELBARROW
WINDOW

ued...

GUESS THE MOVIE

Can you name these famous films from looking at just one scene?





Pictures Shutterstock

KILLER SUDOKU

Killer Sudoku is based on the traditional sudoku grid and every column, every row and every 3x3 box must contain the digits 1 to 9. But there's a twist – the dotted squares must be filled with numbers that add up to that in the left corner.

4		16		2	17			19
17	14			6	4			
	11	9	16			3	16	2
		19	10		6			4
13	3		8		16	10		
			9	12		8	6	20
5	15					16		
17		7		4	8		9	
		4		9	11			

THIS WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

BITS & PIECES

S	E	A	R	C	H		V	A	L	E	T
I			E		O	D	E		A		W
G	A	W	P		R		G	O	R	G	E
H			T	A	S	T	E		D		A
T	A	X	I		E		T		E		K
	G		L		P	R	A	I	R	I	E
R	E	V	E	A	L		R				D
U		E			A	N	I	M	A	L	
B	A	R	E	L	Y		A		D		F
Y		G		A		S	N	E	E	Z	E
	F	E	E	B	L	E			P		U
H				O		G	I	F	T	E	D
A	D	M	I	R	E	R		E		R	
I		E		A		E		A	J	A	R
R		T		T	I	G	E	R			I
C	A	R	G	O		A		F	A	N	G
U		I		R	U	T		U			H
T	A	C	K	Y		E	N	L	I	S	T

GUESS THE CELEB

A Nicole Kidman
B Bradley Cooper

WHAT ON EARTH?

Paperclip

ROUND SUM

21

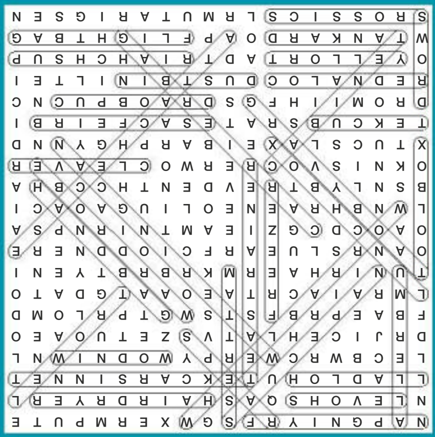
CELEBRITY CODEBREAKER

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
K	Y	T	J	Q	C	S	M	E	Z	O	V	F
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
U	L	I	W	D	H	X	P	G	N	B	R	A

	J		F		A	S	K		W		O		Z	
M	O	V	I	N	G		A	B	H	O	R	R	E	D
	Y		X		O		Y		E		B		N	
A	F	T		I	N	V	A	D	E	D		Z	I	P
	U		I		Y		K		L		N		T	
S	L	U	M	P						C	A	C	H	E
Q			P								G			X
U	N	D	E	R						A	G	I	L	E
A			R								I			R
D	E	V	I	L						K	N	E	L	T
	Q		L		H		S		D		G		O	
J	U	G		D	E	S	T	R	O	Y		A	W	E
	I		A		L		U		U		F		E	
S	T	A	R	T	L	E	D		B	R	U	I	S	E
	Y		T		O		Y	E	T		N		T	

Mystery celebrity Renee Zellweger

WORDSEARCH



N	A	P	G	N	I	Y	R	F	S	G	W	X	E	R	M	P	U	T	E
N	L	E	V	O	H	S	Q	A	S	H	A	I	R	D	R	Y	E	R	L
L	L	A	D	L	O	H	U	T	E	K	C	A	R	S	I	N	N	E	T
L	E	C	B	W	R	C	W	E	R	P	Y	W	O	D	N	I	W	N	L
D	R	J	I	C	E	H	L	A	T	V	S	Z	E	T	U	O	A	E	O
F	B	A	E	P	R	B	F	S	T	S	W	G	T	P	R	L	O	M	D
L	M	R	A	I	A	C	R	T	A	E	O	A	A	T	G	D	A	T	O
T	U	N	I	R	H	A	E	R	M	K	R	B	R	B	T	Y	E	N	I
O	A	N	R	S	L	U	E	A	R	F	C	I	O	D	D	N	E	R	E
O	A	O	C	D	C	G	Z	I	E	A	M	T	N	I	R	N	P	S	A
L	W	N	B	H	R	A	E	N	E	O	L	I	U	G	A	O	A	C	I
B	S	N	L	Y	B	T	R	E	V	D	E	N	T	H	C	C	B	H	A
O	K	N	I	S	V	O	C	R	E	R	W	O	C	L	E	A	V	E	R
X	T	U	C	S	L	A	X	E	I	B	A	R	P	H	G	Y	N	N	D
T	E	K	C	U	B	S	R	A	T	E	S	A	C	F	E	I	R	B	I
D	R	O	M	I	I	H	F	G	S	D	R	A	O	B	P	U	C	N	C
R	E	D	N	A	L	O	C	D	U	S	T	B	I	N	I	L	T	E	I
O	Y	E	L	L	O	R	T	A	D	T	R	I	A	H	C	H	S	U	P
W	T	A	N	K	A	R	D	O	A	P	F	L	I	G	H	T	B	A	G
S	R	O	S	S	I	C	S	L	R	M	U	T	A	R	I	G	S	E	N

KILLER SUDOKU

1	3	7	9	2	4	5	8	6
8	5	2	7	6	1	3	4	9
6	4	9	5	8	3	1	7	2
3	7	8	4	5	6	2	9	1
9	2	5	8	1	7	4	6	3
4	1	6	2	3	9	8	5	7
5	6	4	3	7	2	9	1	8
2	9	1	6	4	8	7	3	5
7	8	3	1	9	5	6	2	4

GUESS THE MOVIE

A Ace Ventura: Pet Detective
B Bugsy Malone

*NB for Prize Puzzles information, see page 53

Pumpkin *Party*

This lot couldn't wait to get that all-important seasonal snap

JENNIFER GARNER
The American actor, 53, knows a thing or two about the favourite Halloween squash, sharing nerdy facts about the vegetable on Instagram to her 17.2m followers.

STACEY SOLOMON
TV personality Stacey, 36, is the queen of embracing the seasons with fancy home makeovers! Each year to mark Halloween, the *Sort Your Life Out* presenter decorates the door of her £1.3m family home, Pickle Cottage.

REESE WITHERSPOON
Embracing all things autumn, the actor, 49, posed in front of her home for an Instagram picture with some pumpkins, sharing a witty caption saying, 'At this point my blood type is basically pumpkin spice' – it's that season!

JB GILL
The former JLS star, 38, spends lots of time in nature day to day as a farmer, so we're not surprised to see him getting stuck into pumpkin picking – however the scarecrow posing may need some work.

GEMMA COLLINS
Getting into the spooky spirit, the reality TV legend, 44, shared a picture of herself and one half of the Jedward twins enjoying time together at a pumpkin patch in Essex.

BINKY FELSTEAD
Reality star Binky, 35, is one of many celebrities who enjoy pumpkin patch visits with the family. The mum of three took to Instagram sharing cute autumnal snaps of herself and her youngest son.

By Afia Kufuor, **Pictures** Instagram

The Bradford Exchange presents the

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artwork abounds
from every angle!*

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(PLEASE PRINT)

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....

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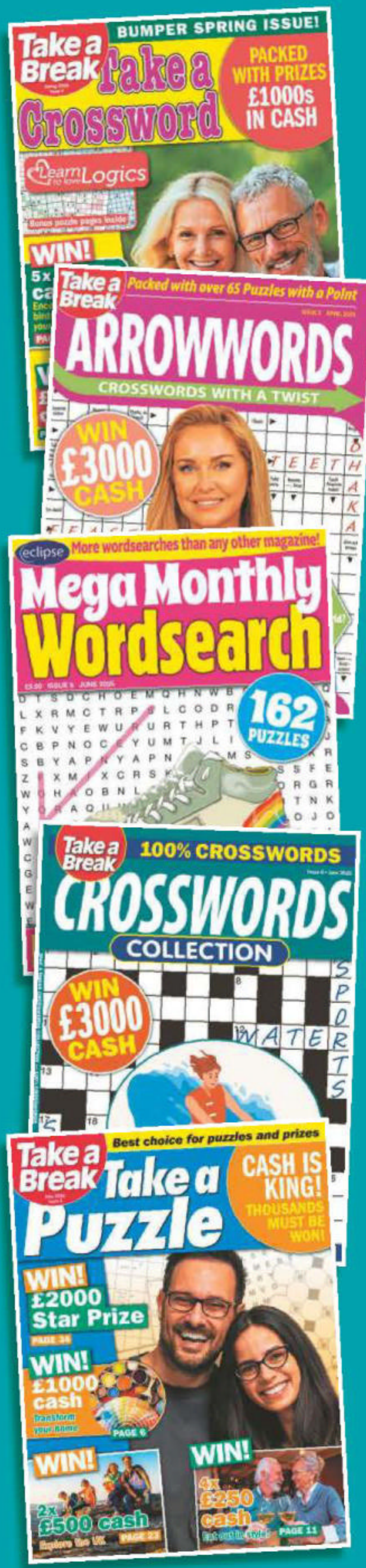
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